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250th Anniversary



Wilmington Massachusetts

1730 - 1980

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250th Anniversary
Wilmington, Massachusetts
1730 - 1980

Compiled and Edited

by

Adele C. Passmore

A commemorative book

Produced by the 250th Anniversary Committee

Hampshire Press

Wilmington, Mass.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 21, 1979

To the Citizens of Wilmington

Congratulations on the 250th anniversary of your community.

In celebrating this important milestone in your history, you can take pride in the values and ideals that have made your community and our Nation grow and prosper. May the vitality and spirit of your people continue to help build a better America and a better world.

Jimmy Carter

W
9-21-79
RUS

FOREWORD

Fifty years have passed since Wilmington celebrated her 200th Birthday and she is still "a good town in which to live."* Our community heritage remains an undeniable source of pride to all who would take the time to become aware of it.

Listed among the Town's tangible benefits in 1930 were "the best town water in the state . . . good roads and bridle trails", a diversity of scenery and schools that were a "watchword with the state educational authorities."* Many changes have inevitably occurred, since then, due to a tremendous increase in population from less than 4,000 in 1930 to a present estimate of over 18,000 people - directly attributable to the accessibility of the Town after 1960 when it was bisected by Interstate Highway Route 93.

The Town of Wilmington's first pumping station, opened in 1927 and located at Brown's Crossing at the northern end of Woburn Street, is still producing much of the Town's best supply of water. In other parts of the Town, water sources have become subject to ground water contamination and unless conservation measures can be taken in time, loss of our Town's well water supply is likely to lead to dependence on out-of-town solutions.

Wilmington's roads remain a source of pride as they are kept in excellent repair while no town in the area can boast of more efficient snow removal. Bridle paths and trails, however, are a thing of the past in most of their former locations just as the keeping of horses has become a comparative rarity.

During the past few decades our Tree Department has waged frustrating war against the Dutch Elm disease and the venerable old Elms, once so common in our Town, have nearly disappeared. One fine old tree, the so-called "Whitefield Elm" lives on, preserved in the center of the Wilmington Town Seal.

Unfortunately, the diversity of scenery has suffered with subdivision of nearly every one of the fine old farms which up until so recently have graced our Town. Only one, the Sciarappa Farm on Andover Street, remains as it was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with all of its original acreage intact. As an irreplaceable historic asset, consideration should be given to preserving it as a working farm for future generations.

An effective Zoning By-Law, passed in 1955, has acted as a deterrent to congestion and haphazard construction on a town-wide basis. However, the landscape becomes increasingly more homogenous. While an important advantage to the Town in many ways, zoning has inevitably led to the creation of thousands of building lots of nearly identical size and shape. Neither developers nor builders have been able to exercise much creativity in the utilization of available land. The result has been the loss of many interesting original geological features.

One hundred and fifty years ago there were over one hundred Colonial and Federalist homes in Wilmington. Of these about one half remained in 1930. Since that time the number has dropped drastically to less than two dozen and many of these have been altered substantially. Home improvement and siding specialists with little regard for historical integrity have stripped bare of their unique decorative features one fine old Victorian home after another along Church Street until that once delightful thoroughfare has lost much of its original charm. In the process of renovation, many earlier homes have suffered the loss of valuable features which with a little fore-thought might have been retained.

Today, Wilmington's public schools are still a source of great pride to the citizens of the Town. Nearly fifty percent of the Town's tax dollar is turned over to the School Department each year at Town Meeting in order to keep up the high level of scholastic endeavor and to maintain an impressive collection of both old and new school buildings.

Back in 1930 the Town boasted of four railroad stations. The old Boston and Lowell Depot in Wilmington Square and the Boston and Maine Depot in North Wilmington survive, although both are now privately owned buildings. In view of the current energy crisis this year the line through North Wilmington has been re-activated for commuter service regardless of the lack of "waiting room" facilities.

Four churches had been established in Wilmington by 1930. That number has increased with the population and there are at present eight churches representing most denominations from which to choose.

For over one hundred years a special source of pride to the Town has been its Public Library. For a town of such relatively small size it is certainly an amazing asset - not only in 1930 when it was contained in the small old Centre School House but especially today. The new Memorial Library which stands on the site once occupied by the original St. Thomas of Villanova Catholic Church, was entirely funded by the people of Wilmington without federal assistance.

Since 1930 many new roads have been added to the map of the Town and a number of "paper" streets have been erased. Some consideration might be given to changing some of the citified street names to the older, quainter ones of past years and to perpetuating the names of more of the Town's old families when choosing names for new streets. The interesting special names which were at one time applied to certain areas in early Wilmington could also be recalled. Perhaps there will be a return of concern for local history in the coming generation and it will be deemed a worthwhile effort to revive this fascinating part of our local heritage as has happened in other towns.

Every registered voter in the Town of Wilmington still has the opportunity to have a voice in the Town's affairs by participating in its traditional, annual, democratic, New England Town Meeting which continues to govern this Town. In 1950 the services of a full time Town Manager was authorized through a Charter change, he being accountable to a traditional five member Board of Selectmen. In addition, many appointed boards and commissions offer the resident ample opportunity to give freely of his time and service in the interest of better government.

As Mr. Deming noted in 1930, so the cry is still "We invite the stranger to come and settle in our midst and share our heritage. Should we not keep the outward symbols of that heritage from being despoiled" and forever lost? Change is inevitable, but it need not be a negative factor. With interest and cooperation we can make change work for the betterment of our Town.

In a small way this Commemorative Book published in celebration of Wilmington's 250th Anniversary is designed to preserve pieces of that heritage. It is the hope of the 250th Anniversary Committee that the collection of memorabilia incorporated here will stimulate continued interest in Wilmington's history so that those of us who call Wilmington "home" will remain sensitive to the role that each can play in preserving what remains of our Town's proud past as we plan and look ahead to a satisfying and rewarding future.

Adele C. Passmore, Chairman
Wilmington's 250th Anniversary
Commemorative Book Committee

*Quotations taken from Harry R. Deming "Salutation" *Historical Sketch, Growth and Progress of Wilmington, Massachusetts 1730 to 1930.*



Adele Passmore shown with copy of original Town Charter, presented to the 250th Anniversary Committee by State Representative James R. Miceli.



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

Joan L. Maga, Chairman
250th Anniversary Committee
Town of Wilmington
Wilmington, Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Maga:

It is a great pleasure to offer the citizens of Wilmington my heartiest congratulations as you celebrate your 250th anniversary. As one of the oldest towns in Massachusetts, you have your roots deep in the history and culture of our great nation.

You have my warmest regards and hopes for a memorable celebration, and my best wishes for another great 250 years!

Sincerely,

Walter F. Mondale

Around Town — 1980



Shawsheen Avenue



Burlington Avenue



Salem Street



Middlesex Avenue



Chestnut Street



Town Hall



Middlesex Avenue



Public Library



Church Street



Post Office and Fire Station

OFFICIAL ACT OF INCORPORATION

1730

On the 25th of September 1730, the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay passed the following act incorporating parts of the territories of Woburn and Reading into a town with the name of Wilmington.

"An act for erecting the northeasterly part of Woburn and westerly part of Reading into a township by the name of Wilmington.

"Whereas the inhabitants of the northeasterly part of the town of Woburn, and the westerly part of the town of Reading, in the county of Middlesex are so situated as to be very remote from the place of the publick worship of God, in either of the said towns, many of them living near seven miles distance there from, who also labour under other great difficulties and inconveniences on several accounts and have thereupon addressed this Court that they may be set off and erected into a separate and distinct township,—

"Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governour, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same.

"Sect. 1. That all the lands lying and being within the north-easterly part of Woburn, and westerly part of Reading aforesaid be and hereby are, set off and constituted a separate and distinct township by

Anna Regina

Secundi

An Act for Erecting

Part of Reading into a Township by the Name of Wilmington.

Whereas the Inhabitants of the North Easterly Part of the Town of Woburn & the Westerly Part of the Town of Reading in the County of Middlesex are so situated as to be very remote from the Place of the publick Worship or God in either of the said Towns, many of them living near seven Miles Distance there from, who also labour under other great Difficulties & Inconveniences on several Accounts & have thereupon addressed this Court that they may be set off & erected into a separate & distinct Township: Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governour Council & Representatives in General Court assembled & by the Authority of the same That all the Lands lying & being within the North Easterly Part of Woburn & Westerly Part of Reading aforesaid be & hereby are set off & constituted a separate & distinct Township by the Name of Wilmington according to the Matter & Boundry following; viz. Beginning at the South Easterly Part of the Land of Hold so called, so to extend to Under Line, thence to Hilltop Line & so upon said Line, including Utraham Layushie Farm: So to run from thence on Millonica Line one Hundred & Reds further & from thence so extend to the Stone Bridge called the Old Spring Bridge: after the said

Rate, entirely from Woburn line including said Towns' land, thence on a
straight line to the South West part of the land of Joseph Jencks, from thence
to extend to the first mentioned bounds; And the further direct
that his Inhabitants of the said Town of Wilmington shall be liable & subject
to pay their just proportion of their past & future rates & taxes of
the said Town, & also for this present year in the Town to which they respectively
belonged & shall be accordingly assessed in such Town in the same manner as
they would have been if this Act had not been made; And the Inhabitants
of the said Town of Wilmington are hereby required within the space of three
Weeks from the publication of this Act to present a list of a ward or wards
Minister of good Conversation & make provision for his comfortable & honourable
Maintenance, & also with all convenient speed to set forth a suitable & com-
modious House for the publick Worship of God in said Town: And the said
Town of Wilmington is hereby accordingly endowed & vested with all the
Privileges, Immunities & Advantages which other Towns in this Province by Law
have & enjoy.

Sept. 25. 1730. This Bill having been read three several Times in the House
of Representatives. Passed to be Enacted. — *Wilmington*

Sept. 25. 1730. This Bill having been read by the several Times
in Council. Passed to be Enacted. — *Wilmington*

Sept. 25. 1730. By His Excellency the Governour
of the Province to the Reading of this Bill. — *Wilmington*

Nod, so called, so to extend to Andover line;
thence to Billerica line and so upon said line,
including Abraham Jaques his farm, and so
to run from thence on Billerica line one hun-
dred rods further; and from thence to ex-
tend to the Stone bridge, called the Cold
Spring Bridge, near the tree called the
Figure of Four Tree; thence on a line to the
South-easterly corner of John Townsend's
land, lately and now in the possession of
Timothy Townsend, about sixty-four rods
easterly from Woburn line, including said
Townsend's land; thence on a straight line to
the south-east part of the land of Joel
Jenkins; and from thence to extend to the
first mentioned bounds.

"And be it further enacted,
"Sect. 2. That the inhabitants of the
said town of Wilmington shall be liable
nevertheless, and subject to pay their just
proportion of their past dues to all province,
county and town rates, for this present year,
in the towns to which they respectively
belonged, and shall be accordingly assessed
in such town in the same manner as they
would have been if this act had not been
made.

"Sect. 3. And the inhabitants of the said
town of Wilmington are hereby required,
within the space of three years from the
publication of this act, to procure and settle
a learned orthodox minister of good conver-
sation, and make provision for his comfor-
table and honourable support; and also with
all convenient speed erect and finish a
suitable and convenient house for the
publick worship of God in said town.

"Sect. 4. And the said town of Wilm-
ington is hereby accordingly endowed and
vested with all powers, privileges, im-
munities and advantages, which other towns
in this province by law have and enjoy."
(Passed and published at Cambridge
September 25, 1730).

WILMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS — 1730 - 1980

An Historical Sketch

The Town of Wilmington was established in order that the inhabitants of the area might have a more convenient place of worship. The General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed an Act on September 25, 1730 setting off the northern part of Woburn, called the "Land of Goshen", the western portion of Reading, and land to the north of Goshen, belonging to Charlestown, known as the "Land of Nod". In 1737, 600 acres belonging to Billerica were also assigned to the Town. With the addition of this so-called "Thumb" of land, Wilmington took on its unique shape which so strikingly resembles that of the print of a hand.

The first road of importance through Wilmington was the Woburn-Andover Road which we call Woburn Street today. Several homes of early settlers are still to be seen standing beside this old road. Once the new Town was established, a new road, which we call Middlesex Avenue, was built and became a part of the Boston to Haverhill Post Road which also included lower Main Street as well as Andover Street to the north. To these first roads were added what we call Salem Street as well as Shawsheen Avenue. Of course, there were many other "cart paths" cut through the wilderness which led from one house to another. Some of these roads today are named in honor of Wilmington's earliest settlers. Examples are Butters Row, Eames and Boutwell Streets, Gowing Road, Harnden and Walker Streets and Carter Lane.

The territory included within the limits of the new Town varied greatly in agricultural potential. Thus the population was widely scattered from the earliest times. After permission to form a new town had been granted, the first step taken was to call a "town meeting" which was held on October 20, 1730. The first Meetinghouse was erected in 1732 at the geographical center of the new Town, adjacent to the "Old Burying Ground".

In 1737, Wilmington was struck by an epidemic of devastating proportions. With an overall population of hardly 400 at the time, 32 people, mostly children, are reported to have died in one year. The illness is believed today to have been diphtheria.

On March 6, 1775, about a month before the Concord Fight, Wilmington voted to call on every able-bodied man from 16 to 60 to report with "arms and ammunition". Twenty-four were chosen to be "Minnit-men" but when the Revolutionary War broke out, two hundred and sixty men, nearly every man in Wilmington did his "turn" fighting for colonial independence.

For about fifty years the Middlesex Canal figured prominently in Wilmington's history. Built entirely with hand tools between its charter in 1793 and opening in 1803, it was one of the most history-making undertakings of the countryside, believed to be the first artificial waterway for commercial purposes to be constructed in America. Cargo barges as well as pleasure boats travelled all the way from Boston through Wilmington, where two canal "locks" and a tavern were located, before

reaching the Merrimack River at Lowell. After 1835 with the coming of the steam railroad, which so nearly paralleled its course, the importance of the Canal dwindled rapidly.

Early in the nineteenth century, Wilmington's first industry was introduced by the Bond family. Several "bake houses" were erected near the center of town and the Bond Cracker became well known. The growing of "hops" in Wilmington became so profitable that nearly every farm had its own "hop-yard" and the Town became known as "Hoptown" after the War of 1812. For a time development of the Town's sandy lowlands into cranberry bogs greatly enhanced land values and Wilmington became the principal cranberry growing town in the area. Apple-growing, also, had a place for it was here on the farm of James Butters that the famous Baldwin apple was discovered by a surveyor while laying out the Middlesex Canal. Another common occupation for Wilmington farmers, especially in Winter, was that of shoemaking.

During the Civil War, the Town performed its full share in rescuing our Union from desolation. Of the Town's quota of ninety men, 14 lost their lives and 11 were discharged for disability.

Wilmington's small population was still made up mostly of farmers, whose main agricultural products were milk and hay. For a time in the late nineteenth century another industry experienced local success, that of cutting, storing and selling of ice from Sandy Pond or "Silver Lake" as it was renamed by an enterprising summer resort promoter of that day.

For many years after the Civil War the tanning of leather was the most substantial industry in the Town. Following World War II, however, many other industries began to locate here in areas which had recently been zoned to accept them. Wilmington remained a rural town up until the mid 1950's when almost overnight the town became a suburban community, retaining in many ways the character of a typical New England town. Population figures increased rapidly during the next 25 years and in 1980 the Town claims approximately 18,000 residents.

During 1973, as the Town became more aware of its own unique heritage, an Historical Commission was appointed. For the first time in the Town's history there was a formal commitment made to discover, record and preserve fast disappearing historical assets. One old Georgian home, the Colonel Joshua Harnden Tavern was saved from destruction in 1973 by citizens of the Town and has been listed on the National Register since 1975. It is presently maintained by the Town as a local heritage museum.

Wilmington's location, only 15 miles northwest of Boston, and its proximity to several superhighways ensures the continued growth of the community. With well-considered planning, it is hoped that Wilmington will continue to retain all that is best of its past while developing its many assets for the future good of the community.



Hay Wagon



Ernest Eames' Milk Truck



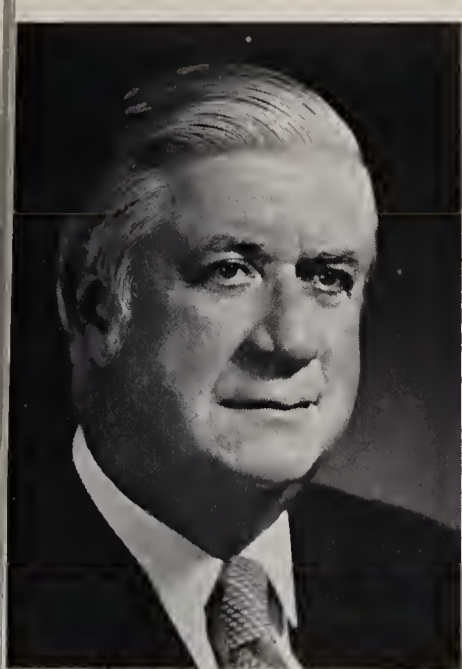
Pasture Pond



N. Bradley Eames



William E. Gowing's Slaughter Barn



The Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

27 September 1979

To the Residents of the Town of Wilmington

It is a privilege for me to join you in the historic celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Town of Wilmington.

I am especially pleased to do so because I once lived in Wilmington and Eleanor Kelley, my personal secretary, is from your town.

My family moved there from Cambridge when I was 8 years old - our doctor recommended a move to the country because of my brother Bill's health. We lived on Glen Road, near Pop Neilson's farm, and I still enjoy reminiscing over the large barn filled with cows; the girl who delivered milk in the pony cart; and the fresh vegetable stand that everyone stopped at every Sunday after Mass at Thompson's Grove. It was a wonderful experience for a city boy to be able to live in the country!

Wilmington is no longer "in the country". In recent years it has been one of the fastest growing communities in the greater Boston area. While developing from a rural town to a suburban community, Wilmington has managed to maintain the character of a typical New England town -- this makes it particularly attractive to those who appreciate and enjoy living in a model residential community.

On this momentous occasion I am happy to extend congratulations and personal good wishes to the citizens of Wilmington for a memorable and successful celebration!

Sincerely,

Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.

A Plan of Wilmington
The reported distance to Boston through 10 miles
to East Cambridge 15 miles, to West 5 miles
There is one house & a Public school & school
houses, a post office, a mill
where it was inhabited in 1750, 750.
From a actual survey by John P. Fisher in 1830



Map of Wilmington drawn in 1830

Eighteen Century Homes

Wilmington is blessed with a number of early homes which have survived 200 years or more. Unfortunately, a great many others have fallen prey to destruction. Re-zoning of rural and residential land into industrial and business acreage and planned demolition preceding suburban development have hastened the demise of at least half a dozen valuable early homes in the past two decades alone.

According to the "enumeration of 1765/66" there were ninety-four houses located in Wilmington in that year. Today there are less than two dozen which existed either at the time of the Town's incorporation or were built before the end of the Revolutionary War and can truly be called "colonial homes."

One of the earliest of these belongs to the Eagan family on Andover Street near Foster's Pond. It was the home of Jonathan Jones and his descendants from 1727 throughout the eighteenth century. Lieut. Jonathan Jones and his son Ensign Jonathan served at Lake George during the French and Indian Wars. Grandson, Russell Jones, who inherited the property, was a member of Wilmington's Company of "Minutemen" who marched to Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775 under the leadership of Capt. Cadwallader Ford Jr. In 1880 this property was the Stockwell family farm.

Wilmington - 1980

by Adele C. Passmore



Standing a little to the south of the Jonathan Jones House the eastern end of the Sciarappa home also belonged to members of the Jones family during the eighteenth century. The original dwelling, the home of David Jones, was much smaller than the present building. The frame is reputed to be filled in with brick called "nogging." Early homes were panelled within instead of plastered because of the scarcity of lime and the thick plank covering and brick filling answered the two-fold purpose of protection against weather and marauding Indians. In 1880 the old house was the home of Ellen, the widow of James K. Pearson.

Proceeding south along Andover Street, once called "the Andover Road", one comes to "Brown's Crossing" where the Salem and Lowell Railroad crossed over Andover Street and Woburn Street until 1927, a period of about eighty years. The smaller colonial home located here, which now belongs to the Passmore family, was the home of William Holt during the 1880's. Originally a gambrel-roofed cottage it is said to have been "raised" on the Fourth of July, 1776, which makes its frame exactly as old as the United States of America. Probably built by housewright Ebenezer Jones, it was the home of descendants of Benjamin and Hannah Eames during much of the nineteenth century. Benjamin and his sons were "cordwainers", an early name for shoemakers.



Nearby at the intersection of the Salem Road with Woburn Street stands a remarkably well-preserved Georgian house, the Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern. Built during the 1770's by Joshua Harnden for his family which included six children, the old house was taken by eminent domain in 1973 for historic preservation by the Town of Wilmington. In 1793, Joshua Harnden was chosen Selectman. As the Selectmen in each community were required by law to provide an "inn" or "public house" for the use of travelers who would pass through their Town, Joshua Harnden volunteered his home for this purpose. Harnden Tavern remained in use for about thirteen years until Col. Harnden's death in 1807. The house was sold to Doctor Silas Brown in 1818 and remained in the possession of the Brown family for over 125 years.

Located further along the "old Salem Road", now called Salem Street, the home of School Committeeman John Brooks was extensively remodelled about 1915 by Caleb S. Harriman, owner of the C. S. Harriman Tannery in North Wilmington. In 1880 this home was a summer boarding house owned by Elizabeth Blanchard, a descendant of the original builder, Cadwallader Ford. Ford emigrated from Ireland and settled here in the "Land of Nod" during the mid-1720's. The house remained in the hands of his descendants throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.





6

The home of Attorney and Mrs. Fred Corum situated still further down on Salem Street was the home of the Scales family during the eighteenth century and dates back at least to 1741. A pane of glass over the front door, now in the hands of the Massachusetts Historical Society, bore the inscription "Aug 2 1769. The infamous Governor left our Town." The "infamous Governor" is reputed to be Governor Barnard, who attempted to arrest certain townspeople in that year for "constructive treason." The house is a specimen of a common building style of that day. Its condition in 1880 is described by the Rev. Daniel P. Noyes as "speaking plainly of hard times and rough usage"; but 1980 finds it lovingly restored and a source of pride to its present owners.



7

Over on Park Street the original Gowing Homestead can still be found, although almost obscured by the dozens of new homes erected recently upon its acreage. Built about 1720 it was the home of Daniel Gowing whose descendants claimed it throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Otis Gowing, the last of the line to live in the old house, resided there in 1880. Today it is a "duplex" shared by the Anderson brothers.



8

Proceeding south along Woburn Street, "the old East Road to Woburn", one soon comes upon an unexpected and much appreciated glimpse of what was once a common country setting. The house on the east side of the road, now called "Wheelgate Farm", which belongs to the Richardson sisters, was in 1880 the home of N. Bradley Eames, retail meat salesman. The house was purchased in 1764 by blacksmith, John Hathorne, along with 36 acres of land from Deacon Thomas Bouttel, who resided there as early as 1732. It was probably built by Bouttel before 1730 when it would have been located in Reading.

The fine old "saltbox" across the road was the home of W. W. Pickering, market gardner in 1880, and is now the home of Gertrude Eames Allgrove, a tenth generation descendant of Robert Eames who came before 1670 to make his home in nearby Maple Meadow while this area was still a part of Woburn. The Allgrove home was probably built about 1745 by "housewright" Thomas Evans. Evans is credited with constructing a handsome pulpit for the first Wilmington Meetinghouse at the time of its remodeling in 1765.



9

The big red farmhouse nestled among the trees further down the "Woburn Road" was built by Ebenezer Buck before the incorporation of the Town. Located opposite the Wildwood Street intersection it is today the home of the Wolfe family. Probably built in 1714, at the time of Ebenezer's marriage to Lydia Eames, the house in the "Hundred Acre Meadow" was sold ten years later, after Lydia's death, to Ebenezer's brother-in-law Daniel Eames. Daniel Eames, a grandson of Robert Eames, lived in the house until 1748 when he went to Haverhill leaving the farmhouse to his sons, John and Jacob. Descendants of John made the farmhouse their home for several generations. Among these was Lemuel Cobb Eames, Selectmen and State Legislator, who resided there in 1880.



10

On the other side of the road between Woburn and Wildwood Streets is still located the old Buck Homestead, built about 1672 by Ephraim Buck, the father of Ebenezer. Most, if not all, of the house that remains today, however, was built at about the time of the Revolution. In 1775 Constable Ephraim Buck Jr. turned over the Town's taxes which he had collected to Wilmington's treasurer, Timothy Walker, instead of to "his Majesty's treasurer" Harrison Gray, Esq. In this house, also, lived Ephraim Buck Senior who shot the last bear seen in Wilmington. In 1880 the house was the home of Benjamin Buck who granted the "parsonage" back to the Congregational Church as an act of generosity after it had been turned over to him in payment of a debt. Today it is the home of the Vander Sande family.



11



12

Only two colonial homes survive on Chestnut Street. One the home of William Butters II was occupied by George Taylor in 1880 and is today the home of the Emery family, who manage an Appaloosa horse farm. Will Butters, II built his house about 1690. Tradition has it that Will Butters was the first white child to be born in what is now Wilmington. He was the father of ten children whose homes spread up and down the road so that the area early became known as "Butters Row." William Butters was chosen to be one of five Selectmen at Wilmington's first annual Town Meeting held in March, 1731. On nearby Wood Hill the "Butters Apple" was discovered in 1794 by a surveyor while laying out the Middlesex Canal. It was subsequently cultivated by Col. Laommi Baldwin of Woburn who finally gave the apple his own name.



14

The home of the Gionfreddo family, a little further down Woburn Street, is also a very early house, probably built about 1690. (A grave of an Eames has been found on the premises dated 1711.) This property was purchased in 1835 by Asa G. Sheldon, author of the quaint, interesting book "Asa G. Sheldon, Wilmington Farmer." In 1880 Asa's son, Harrison Allen Sheldon, resided here. H. A. Sheldon was the founder of the Farmers and Mechanics Club in 1875. Many annual cattle shows in Wilmington were sponsored by this club.



13

Samuel Butters, a son of William Butters II, built the other which is now the Hinxman house. Originally a so-called "garrison-house", it was constructed about 1712 with an overhanging second story sufficiently extended to permit openings for the discharge of guns in times of attack. Indians were still to be feared in that day — only five years after the wife and child of John Harnden had been murdered not far to the north. In 1880 the property was shared by Mrs. Avery and Mrs. Spaulding. The house no longer retains its garrison colonial lines, having been radically altered when it was rebuilt more than one hundred years ago.



On the south side of Burlington Avenue a small "cape cod" cottage survives from the eighteenth century although it is now in need of restoration. Built 200 years ago by Ebenezer Foster, it was the home of Noah Clapp in 1880 who operated the Butters-Clapp Mill on nearby Wood Hill. Today it is the property of Mrs. Helen Del Torto.

The Eldad Carter House stands on Shawsheen Avenue, once called "the old Shawshin' Path." It belonged to the Eldad Carter heirs in 1880. Originally built as a "salt-box", it was owned by Boutwells and by Moses Noyes during the eighteenth century. Currently, it is the property of a Carter descendant, Claire Currier Sperry. It has been said that school was "kept" here before the West Schoolhouse was built. In 1795 at the time of the construction of the Middlesex Canal through the nearby fields to the rear of the house it was the boyhood home of Eldad Carter. During his lifetime Carter was chosen to nearly every Town office, living his entire life in this place.



Further west on the Tewksbury-Wilmington town line is located the Deacon James Thompson House which is now divided into four apartments. The family of Mr. Rich Carter, a brother of Eldad, lived here in 1880. Deacon James Thompson, one of several area residents to support the proposal for a new town and church, was known to have walked seven miles from here on snowshoes to reach the church at Woburn before the Town of Wilmington became established.





18

Located closer to Main Street on the southwest corner of Clark Street is the Isaac Carter Place, the present residence of the Pierro family. In 1880 it was the home of Mr. William Eames, or "Ames", who kept a little store here. This home is believed to have been in existence at the time of the founding of the Town although it has been altered in appearance and may have been rotated upon its foundation.

Two additional ancient houses are still in their original locations on Middlesex Avenue. The oldest, just north of the brook in what was once called Settle Meadow, is presently the home of the Herman family. It was built as a one story house in 1703 by Daniel Snow whose grist mill stood across the road. Extensively rebuilt in the past year, sections of the original house include the southwest parlor. The Snow Homestead, sold to Capt. Kendal Person in 1722, contained 209 acres which included the entire central section of the present Town of Wilmington. Kendal Person was one of the original seventeen members of the new Wilmington Church. In 1742 the house became the home of one of Wilmington's most beloved pastors, the Rev. Isaac Morrill, who was ordained in Wilmington on his twenty-third birthday and remained here over fifty years until his death in 1793. A grandson, Deacon Cadwallader Morrill, resided here in 1880.



19

A third house on Middlesex Avenue, that of the Belanson family, was once situated on Main Street at the intersection of Butters Row. It was moved to its present location at the corner of Adelaide Street during the first part of the nineteenth century. Called by some the "Levi Reynolds House", the Pierce-Reynolds House is believed to have been built by Ebenezer Pierce as early as 1716. Originally constructed as a "saltbox", its roof-line was changed after 1890 to the present quasi-gambrel style.

With every passing decade more and more of our earliest homes have disappeared from the scene. Those which have not been destroyed outright have been radically changed by reconstruction instead of restoration. Homeowners considering alterations to historic homes are advised to consult with State and local Historical Commissions before reconstruction commences. Only with real concern and sincere effort can there be any hope of preserving what little remains of this irreplaceable Town heritage.



20

Then and Now — Two Early Homes



Tweed-Manning House — the Tucker Place — built in the late 17th century



*Ballardvale Street industry in 1980
Site of the old Tweed-Manning House*



*Boutwell Place in 1900
Built about 1725*



Boutwell Street today — all that remains of Boutwell House is the curve in the road.



EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 20, 1979

Residents of the Town of Wilmington
c/o 250th Anniversary Committee
Wilmington, Massachusetts 01887

Dear Friends:

I want to extend my congratulations to the townspeople of Wilmington as you celebrate your 250th anniversary in 1980.

This is indeed an historic occasion, and I share your pride in commemorating this event.

As Wilmington residents have preserved the best in your past heritage, so you can look forward to a promising future.

With my best wishes, and happy 250th birthday!

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy

Wilmington Churches



Forest Street Chapel



St. Thomas of Villanova



Temple Shalom



Kingdom Hall

1980



United Methodist Church



St. Dorothy's Church



Congregational Church



Baptist Church

A HISTORY OF WILMINGTON CHURCHES

By Adele C. Passmore

As early as 1720, due to the influx of population into the area which is now the Town of Wilmington, there was a sufficient number of inhabitants to warrant serious attention to the idea of erecting a church here. The nearest meeting house was in Woburn or Reading fully five to seven miles away. Because services were to be attended regularly and punctually there was much hardship and inconvenience.

Inhabitants of the area decided to seek relief and provisions were made to have services closer by in the Goshen schoolhouse. This proved less than satisfactory so in 1727 a petition was presented to the Great and General Court asking that a meetinghouse be erected nearer the center of the area population. This request was refused and several other petitions were presented by various inhabitants of parts of Reading and Woburn before it was proposed to set off the area as a separate Town.

The idea of setting off a new Town met with favor and an act was passed, incorporating the Town of Wilmington. The object was to make it feasible to maintain worship and religious teaching for the local inhabitants of the area. The Charter was granted by the Court with the condition that the Town settle a minister "of good conversation" within three years.

Church of Christ — Congregational

On December 3, 1730 it was voted to build a meetinghouse. Completed in 1732, it was located a few rods north of the present Congregational Church. Rev. James E. Varney was chosen minister and ordained on October 24, 1733 at which time there were seventeen male members. The following year women were added to the membership rolls.

Isaac Morrill, the second minister of the Town, was a graduate of Harvard College. He was ordained and settled over the Wilmington Church in 1741 on his 23rd birthday. Rev. Morrill continued in the service of the Town until his death in 1793.

Rev. Freegrace Reynolds followed Rev. Morrill and served for 35 years.

The Wilmington Meetinghouse was first enlarged and improved in 1766. Then in 1813 it was replaced by another built on the site of the present church, south of the Old Burying Ground. The second meetinghouse stood until 1864 when a spark from the burning building across the road ignited the steeple. The church was entirely destroyed by the fire. Inspired by a greater faith the people of the parish proceeded to build a new and better meetinghouse. Dedicated on the second anniversary of the fire, February 15, 1866, the present church is the third to be erected.



First Congregational Church erected — 1865, "Old Burying Ground" and site of first meeting house.

In the early days it was the custom for the Town to support the Church. In most cases the boundaries of the parish and the town were the same and the business of the Church was transacted at Town Meeting. Every man, if he wished voting privileges, was obliged to belong to the local parish. Not until 1824 could a person join a religious society of his choice. In that year a law was passed providing that church membership no longer be compulsory.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Francis Norwood in 1834 that a "parish society" was formed to support the Church after it had been set apart from the Town. From that time until the present support for the church became the responsibility of the membership.

In November, 1854, the parish acquired the parsonage by deed from Thomas D. Bond. The house which stands on the corner of Wildwood Street was given to Benjamin Buck a few years later, in payment of a loan he had made to the church. Buck deeded the building back to the church with the stipulation that it always be properly maintained for the use of the Church.

The Ladies Benevolent Society, now called the "L.B.S.", was formed in 1857 and faithfully supported the Church through the years in many charitable ways.

Mr. Isaac Morrill's answer to the Town Call —

To ye Inhabitation of ye Town of Wilmington now met —
an answer to ye Call given by ye Town:

To ye Inhabitation of ye Town of Wilmington now met — an answer to ye Call —

*Isaac Morrill's
answer to
the call*

In as much as you have been pleased to give me an invitation to settle
with you in ye work of ye Ministry in this Town and having given
me time for Consideration in ye Important Affair I do now after
Mature Consideration and ye best Advice I can Obtain from Judicious Men —
Manifest My Compliance with ye Call and votes Depending upon ye
Great Head of the Church for Direction and Assistance In ye Great
Work of ye Gospel And as for my Maintainance among you
I Expect you will be very Careful that My Salary Retain
its Value that My Wood be seasonally Provided according to
the Vote of ye Town and I hope you will hereafter
Communicate towards ye Supply of My Wants as My Necessity
shall Call for and as your Ability shall Inable you and
Especially that you are Mindful of Me in all your Adverses
to ye Throne of Grace that I may be more and more
furnished with Ministerial Gifts and Qualifications that I
may be Inabled to walk and Live as becomes a Minister
of Jesus Christ — And as for Me I hope ye Language of
My heart is this God forbid that I should sin against ye Lord
In ceasing to pray to God for you —

*Wilmington
March 2nd 1740/1*

*I Remain
your friend
Isaac Morrill*

*at a Town Meeting upon ye 31st Day of March
In ye year 1741*

*Resolved that ye Ordination of Mr Isaac Morrill be upon ye
Twentyeth Day of May next insuring ye Date hereof
Resolved that thirty pounds be granted to Deacons; & that
the Ordination of Mr Isaac Morrill*

In as much as you have been pleased to give Me an Invitation to Settle with you in ye work of ye Ministry in this Town and having given Me time for Consideration in ye Important Affair I do now after Mature Consideration and ye best Advice I can Obtain from Judicious Men — Manifest My Compliance with ye Call and votes Depending upon ye Great Head of the Church for Direction and Assistance In ye Great Work of ye Gospel And as for my Maintainance among ye I Expect you will be very Careful that my Salary Retain its Value that My Wood be seasonally Provided according to the Vote of ye Town and I hope you will hereafter — Communicate

towards ye supply of My Wants as My Necessity shall Call for and as your Ability shall Inable you and Especially that you are Mindful of Me in all your Adverses to ye Throne of Grace that I may be more and more furnished with Ministerial Gifts and Qualifications that I May be Inabled to walk and Live as becomes a Minister of Jesus Christ - And as for Me I hope ye Language of My heart is this God forbid that I should sin against ye Lord In ceasing to pray to God for you —

I Remain
Wilmington your friend
March 2nd — 1740/1 Isaac Morrill



The Congregational Church reflects in the Baptismal pond located in Wildwood Cemetery at the rear of Town Hall. The Town Hall was originally built as a Baptist Church complete with steeple in 1842.

Photograph courtesy of Larz F. Neilso

In 1887 the legislature abolished the right of religious societies to assess taxes on their members. A law was also passed enabling each church, if so inclined, to become incorporated and take over the property from the parish society. This was done by the Church of Christ in Wilmington on October 10, 1887 and the name was changed to the Congregational Church.

Only minor changes have been made in the Church since its erection in 1865. During the pastorate of Rev. Harmon (1885-1900) the organ and choir were brought down stairs and placed at the right of the pulpit. During the pastorate of Mr. Rollins (1900-1906) the original windows were removed and the clear glass replaced with memorial stained glass windows. During the 1940's, while Mr. Martin was minister, both of these changes were reversed.

In 1953, in order to accommodate the growing church school attendance brought on by a rapidly increasing Town population, a parish house addition was made to the rear of the Church.

On its 225th Anniversary church membership had risen from the original seventeen to 500 member families.

In 1980 there are approximately 275 members.



Congregational Church circa 1900
note end of horse sheds

Baptist Church Society

After the law was passed in 1824 separating the Church from the Town Government and allowing other religious points of view to co-exist, a Free Will Baptist Society was the first new church to be established in Wilmington.



Early Baptist Church — present Town Hall —
as it appeared in 1930

Land was sold to the Baptists in 1841 by Walter Blanchard and the building which is now the Town Hall was built as a Baptist Church, complete with steeple. Located behind the old building is a pond in Wildwood Cemetery, the baptismal font which dates to the establishment of this church.

Elder John M. Durgin, who lived at the corner of Mystic and Middlesex Avenues, was pastor of the Baptist Church and also taught at the South School off Butters Row.

The Baptist Society was short-lived for when the Congregational Church across the road burned to the ground in 1864 the Town was able to purchase the Baptist Church for \$1,000 for use as a Town House.

For about one hundred years there was no Baptist Society in Wilmington. Area residents attended services in Reading. Then on April 6, 1956 the first organizational meeting was called.

Meetings were held for several months in the East Wilmington Improvement Hall and later in the Grange Hall on Wildwood Street.

In 1968 a four acre farm on Church Street was purchased from Dr. Hosmer. An addition was built onto the residence to allow for a modest sanctuary and for several years this building served as a worship center, Christian education building and parsonage. The new brick building, erected in 1968, now houses the sanctuary and several classrooms.

In 1980 the history of Wilmington's Baptist Church spans nearly a quarter of a century.

United Methodist Church

About 100 years ago, the beginnings of a Wilmington Methodist Episcopal Church began to be evident when a few individuals gathered in various homes for religious fellowship.

Arrangements were made to hold services in the upper room of Ames Hall and on May 28, 1881 the first Methodist service was held in Wilmington. Rev. E. H. McKenney of Saugus became the first pastor.

A plot of land was purchased at the corner of what is now Thurston Avenue and Church Street. Work began in 1883 and the chapel, which cost \$1,800, was dedicated on February 22, 1884 while Rev. Putnam Webber was pastor.

During the ministry of Rev. W. D. Thurston, between 1888 and 1891, a parsonage was built on Thurston Avenue and a young peoples society was first organized. In 1891 the Ladies' Aid was born, now called the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

Horse sheds were erected behind the church in

1887 and a small classroom was added onto the chapel in 1889.

The first Sunday School superintendent was Mr. Richard L. Folkins. He was followed by Mr. Walter G. Frazee who served for 27 years.

In 1908 Fred H. Roberts presented an organ to the church in memory of his first wife. The Roberts family offered the use of 89 Church Street as a parsonage in 1914. Later, in 1936, Mrs. Roberts deeded the building to the church.

Extensive additions were made possible during the pastorate of Rev. Howard G. Hageman because a generous donation of \$16,000 was made by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Roberts. Rededication ceremonies were held on May 13, 1917.

A "preaching place" was established at South Tewksbury and in February, 1912 South Tewksbury and Wilmington became a joint "charge" to be administered by the preacher at Wilmington. Tewksbury became independent in 1928.

By 1930 church membership had increased to 217. During the pastorate of Rev. Stead K. Thornton

*Parsonage offered
by the Roberts
Family in 1914 —
89 Church Street*



Methodist Church in 1915

The Catholic Church

extensive alterations were made once more. The organ was moved and folding panels installed so that the wall behind the altar could be opened up to allow use of the rooms at the rear of the sanctuary for overflow congregations.

With the advent of the pastorate of Rev. Otis A. Maxfield in 1947, the church began to grow significantly. Following the war as a result of the population "explosion" Wilmington Methodists watched their sanctuary become filled every Sunday. With a capacity of only 96 people there was hardly room for the 100 new members who were received between 1947 and 1950.

A vote was taken in 1952 to join the newly formed Wilmington Council of Churches.

Rev. Richard Harding became pastor in September, 1953. Sunday school enrollment rose to 468 young people and by 1955 the total recorded adult membership had reached 410.

A week-long celebration was planned in 1957 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Methodist Church in Wilmington. It culminated on Sunday, March 24th with ground breaking ceremonies for a new church building which had been in the planning stage for several years. The conerstone was laid on November 10th in ceremonies conducted by Rev. Harding. After its completion the new building was used extensively for both church and community events, such as meetings of the Wilmington Womans Club and Boy and Girl Scout troops.

The old church, now called Roberts House, was completely converted to church school use. Average attendance at Sunday services increased beyond all expectations from 160 the last year in the old church to 260 the first year in the new.

In 1958, a parsonage was purchased on Kelly Road for the pastor while the old parsonage on Church Street was used by the assistant pastor.

In 1961 a part time secretary became a necessity as well as off-street parking facilities. After nearly 34 years as both organist and choir director, Viola Stavelly retired.

The first full-time assistant pastor, Fred Hess, began his term in 1962.

On September 18, 1974 another milestone in the history of the United Methodist Church was observed with the burning of the mortgage on the new church, made possible in just seventeen years. The service was conducted by the present pastor, Rev. Richard L. Evans.

Because its basic design was no longer practical and since its overall condition required much attention the decision was finally made to raze the old church building in the summer of 1976.

Since 1958 steady growth under the leadership of the Reverends Harding, Thomason, Miller and Evans saw the budget grow from \$17,500 to \$70,000. As of December, 1979, church membership numbered 734.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century many families of the Catholic faith were settling here in Wilmington as first the railroads and then the street railways opened up the area. A large number of French Canadian extraction found employment in the Tannery in North Wilmington. These faithful Catholics traveled at great inconvenience to the surrounding towns to attend church services. In the late 1870's a church was built in Ballardvale and because a Catholic education was so important to them, parents as well as children walked the railroad tracks to attend Mass and religious instruction classes there.

In 1880 seven of these youngsters were organized into a class for religious instruction at the home of Bernard McEnroe who lived in the Squire Samuel Eames place near the North Wilmington Depot. Adults continued their weekly pilgrimage to Andover.

Meanwhile Thomas McMahan purchased the former home of Deacon James Skilton, located in the centre of Town opposite the present Baptist Church, and offered his home for Sunday School classes.

The McMahons were soon approached by Fr. Marice J. Murphy of Andover about possible accommodations within their home for the celebration of Mass. A small room directly over the front door was converted for the purpose and an altar erected at which the first Mass, celebrated in Wilmington was offered on October 10, 1884.



First Mass offered at McMahan home

The large number of Catholics in the Town soon became apparent and additional Masses were offered at the Town Hall. One of the early Catholics to come to Wilmington was Michael Carlin who donated a lot of land, the site of the present Memorial Library, for the erection of a Catholic Church.

Soon after Fr. Boland arrived in Wilmington the Thomas D. Bond estate was purchased as a residence for Priests. Here Fr. Boland lived for 14 years until his death.



*St. Thomas of Villanova Chapel —
erected in 1888*

Dedicated on October 28, 1888, to the worship of God under the patronage of St. Thomas of Villanova, the chapel served from 1888 until 1919 as a mission of the Augustinian Priests in Andover. At this time His Eminence Wm. Cardinal O'Connell made Wilmington a separate parish and appointed the first resident pastor, Rev. Richard A. Boland. Also in 1919 Masses were provided at Silver Lake. Summer residents gathered at the hall in Thompsons Grove, and Fr. Boland purchased the lot on which a chapel, later St. Dorothy's, was erected.



St. Thomas' Rectory

During the term of Fr. Andrew White the church on Middlesex Avenue was enlarged and renovated. Paintings were restored and a heating system installed. Following Fr. White was Fr. George Brennan who perceived the need for a place to hold social events. At this time the most practical and useful Villanova Hall was built.

In a spirit of gratitude Fr. Brennan offered the use of the Hall to the community for Town Meetings. On the Rectory grounds a crucifix was erected by Fr. Brennan in memory of his parents, and a shrine was erected in memory of the men in the Armed Forces on the church property, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Biggar in memory of their son Marine Paul Biggar.



Villanova Hall in 1980

Congregation Ahavas Achim D'Aron

Due to increases in the Catholic population in Wilmington after World War II Fr. Albert Shea suggested Villanova Hall be converted into a church and the original church became a hall. Villanova Hall was dedicated on November 29, 1949, however, soon after this change was accomplished, fire gutted its interior. Generous assistance was offered as the ministers of other faiths offered their houses of worship for Catholic use.

Fr. Edmund W. Croke arrived in Wilmington to be greeted by the burnt timbers of St. Thomas of Villanova Hall and the news that St. Thomas was to be divided with the Silver Lake district becoming a separate parish under the title of St. Dorothy's.

Fr. Joseph Leahey was appointed as the first pastor of St. Dorothy's and took up residence at St. Thomas until a new rectory was provided on Harn-den Street. By May, 1960 the new rectory had been built and at this time the new St. Dorothy's Church was dedicated.

With the assistance of parishioners and friends Villanova Hall was rebuilt, the largest and best furnished hall in Town, to serve both spiritual and social activities.

Due to the increased number of newcomers it was realized that the seventy-six year old church edifice was no longer adequate for parish needs.

On February 21, 1960 Fr. Croke turned the first sod for the new church on the property adjacent to the Rectory on Middlesex Avenue. Seven months later, in October, the corner stone was laid and the first solemn Mass was sung by Fr. Croke in the presence of his Eminence, Richard Cardinal Cushing, who also presided and preached.

Colonial in architectural style, the new St. Thomas, in its natural setting is a tribute to the generosity and faith of its parishioners.

The parish enjoyed a new vitality as it approached its Golden Jubilee. A highlight of the Observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary as an independent parish was the presence of Cardinal Cushing who presided at an evening concelebrated Mass. October 24, 1969, assisted by Fr. Thomas Croke, Monsignor Leonard McMahan, Fr. Paul Berube and Fr. Edmund Parker with Fr. Francis W. Mackin as Master of Ceremonies.

The many changes introduced by the Vatican at this time were introduced gradually. Not only did the people respond by taking a more meaningful part in the liturgy, but also by performing a more effectual role in the educational and administrative activities of the parish. The most significant change was the formation of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish Council, a vital organ of Parish life, which continues to provide a forum for discussion of parish matters.

In 1980 there are nearly 2000 Catholics belonging to the parish of St. Thomas. Assisting Rev. Fr. Thomas Reynolds are Fr. Francis E. Daley and Fr. Victor LaVoie.

At the time of the First World War there was a small but growing permanent Jewish population residing in Wilmington mostly in the vicinity of Salem Street near the Tewksbury town line. During the summer months many more of the Jewish faith made their annual pilgrimage to Wilmington.

Late in the spring of 1917 eight young men met in a field off Salem Street where they often gathered in the open air for religious observances. The possibility of building a synagogue nearby was discussed and it was voted that each should make a contribution of five dollars.

A chairman, Mr. Joshua Cohen, and vice chairman, Mr. Harry Modelevsky were elected. Later, Jacob Cheifitz, who owned the bakery nearby, was chosen secretary and Mr. Joseph Minsky, became treasurer. Others who met in the field that day were Harry Solow, Morris Modelevsky, Hyman Minsky and Jacob Winer.

Before a building could be constructed a plot of land was needed so the two chairmen approached Mr. Adelman who owned a tract on Salem Street. He not only donated the necessary land but also made a donation of \$100.00.

The little group, with a total budget of \$140.00 was now ready to purchase the lumber needed to build a synagogue. Each man was called upon to contribute his own particular skill and finally four walls were erected and a roof added.

A Torah was also needed and with the help of a club organized by the women and children one was obtained for \$150.00.

By 1930 the membership of the Congregation Ahavas Aghim D'Aron, meaning "Brotherly Love", totaled sixteen faithful people all striving for the success of the synagogue.

During the period immediately preceding World War II a group of young people of the Congregation became restless and dissatisfied with the old order. They decided to break away from the established synagogue and became intent on creating their own.

The Wilmington Hebrew Community Center Inc. was chartered on July 21, 1942. A thirty by sixty foot cellar hole was dug and in it a hall built which was heated as well as nicely finished. There were approximately twenty-five families meeting in this "cellar hall" in 1942. The number grew to over one hundred by 1948.

Although there were nearly 250 potential members in the area these families chose to worship elsewhere. In an attempt to draw more members a social hall was built onto the side of the old Synagogue. More and more of the old summer places were being sold, however, to other than Jewish people and as the older members of the Synagogue passed on the Jewish population of the area began to dwindle.

It decreased to such an extent that the younger Community Center and the older Synagogue were forced by lack of numbers to unite. By December, 1967, both groups had become one once more and the name given the consolidated membership of approximately twenty families was Temple Shalom, meaning "Peace".

Membership in Temple Shalom continued to decline during the 1960's and 70's until the ten men required to conduct a religious service could no longer be obtained.

The last high holidays to be celebrated in the Wilmington Synagogue were Rosh Shana - the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kipper - the Day of Fasting, held in the fall of 1978.

The Forest Street Chapel

Established in 1929, the Forest Street Chapel was known for the first five years as the Wilson Memorial Community Church. It was instituted by a group of people who wanted a church on the west end of town. Its first pastor, Rev. Arthur A. Simmons, also preached at the First Congregational Church although the charter members were all of different Protestant denominations.

The name of the church was changed in 1930 to the Second Congregational Church when the present building on the corner of Forest Street and Aldrich Road was erected. The chapel could never afford a full time minister. Instead, preachers came from Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy and were paid for each Sunday service. Through the years the church was also ministered by several retired pastors.

During the 1940's the name was again changed to become the Forest Street Congregational Church.

When the Methodist Church donated a reed organ in the 1950's the old pump organ was taken apart and used to make an altar. Pulpit, altar rail and pews were all donated by the parish.

In the early 1960's the interior was completely renovated and church membership grew rapidly. The need arose for more space for Sunday School and church socials. An addition was made which doubled the area on the basement level.

Mr. James Mann was superintendent of the Sunday School for thirty-five years. At one time there were as many as fifty children enrolled: Presently serving as Deacon and trustee, Mann has been moderator and even a lay preacher when the church was occasionally without a minister.

In the late 1960's membership dropped and the Episcopal churches in several neighboring towns supplied a minister for three months each. After nine months a minister from Burlington was chosen and it is hoped that the number of devoted members now only twelve, will begin to grow once more. The little church in 1979 became known as the Forest Street Chapel of St. Marks Episcopal Church.

The Wilmington Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was formed in 1958 from members of the Lowell and Somerville Congregations. Its preaching work focused on Wilmington and five area towns. Meetings were first held in the old Grange Hall on Wildwood Street.

In the spring of 1960 ground was broken for the erection of Kingdom Hall on Bridge Lane. Completed with much volunteer labor by members of the congregation, it was occupied in December of the same year.

As the Wilmington group continued to grow it became necessary to divide. First a Burlington Congregation was formed which continued to meet for a time in the Wilmington Hall. Then, as growth continued, it was necessary to divide again. In 1966, a Billerica Congregation was formed.

There are at present 84 Witnesses who regularly preach throughout the Wilmington Tewksbury areas. A body of seven elders have oversight of the preaching and teaching activity for the two towns. Witnesses have become familiar faces in Wilmington because of their 'House to House' activity.

"The Bible Speaks" Ministry

The newest religious organization to make its place in Wilmington is "The Bible Speaks World Outreach" ministry which came to town in August, 1974 when Pastors Edward Mosher and Steven Quinlan began a youth Bible Study group in a barn on Hopkins Street.

The following October an adult Bible Study came into being which grew so rapidly that by spring larger quarters were required.

Fifty people met on May 9, 1975 for the first Sunday worship service held at the American Legion Hall.

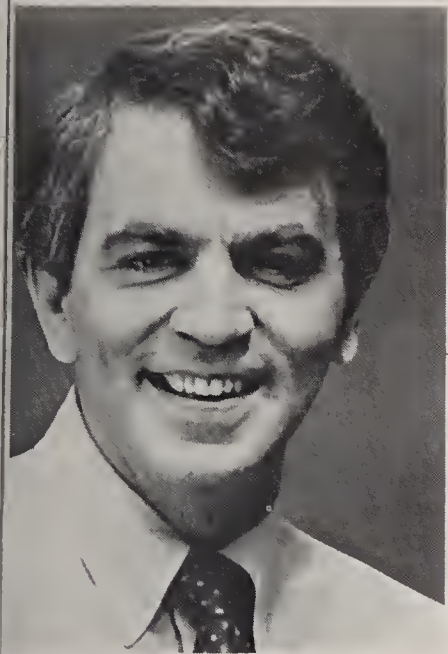
A year later Pastor Quinlan moved his ministry to the North Intermediate School where it remained for two years before moving again to the West.

Pastor John Palmer took over the ministry in 1979 and at this time the name was changed from "The Bible Speaks in Wilmington" to "The Bible Speaks in Northeastern Massachusetts".

After meeting for a year at the Woburn Street School temporary quarters were found at St. Anthony's Club in North Woburn.

Plans were made in 1980 to return to Wilmington. The Ministry now occupies the old "Garden of Eden Country Club" house on Chestnut Street which offers the promise of a permanent location for the Ministry's many study groups and services of worship.

Of the 170 people who regularly attended services here about 30 are Wilmington residents.



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

PAUL E. TSONGAS
MASSACHUSETTS

November 7, 1980

To the Citizens of the Town of Wilmington:

I am pleased to join with you in the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Town of Wilmington.

On this historic occasion, we are reminded of the many contributions which Wilmington residents have made to our national heritage. The spirit and commitment to high ideals which were displayed by citizens of Wilmington who fought for colonial independence in 1775 are evidenced today by your ongoing efforts to preserve and interpret Wilmington's heritage and historic assets for future generations.

Congratulations and best wishes for a successful celebration of your 250th anniversary.

Sincerely,

Paul Tsongas
PAUL E. TSONGAS
United States Senator

PET/psj

THE WILMINGTON TOWN SEAL

The Story of "The Whitefield Elm"

By Adele C. Passmore



The Town of Wilmington adopted its official Town Seal on April 11, 1899. Located in the center of the design is a representation of the so-called "Whitefield Elm", a tree which stood for more than a century and a half beside the old Post Road to Boston, now called Middlesex Avenue, about opposite to the Whitefield School, recently the Town Hall Annex. Beneath the elm tree pictured on the seal is the silhouetted outline of the Harriman Tannery which stood for many years behind the tree to the northeast.

Tradition has it that under or near this tree the eminent English divine, George Whitefield, once preached to the "Indians" in the Town, perhaps about 1760. The term "Indians" was once applied to all who were uncouth and illiterate. It has been said that Rev. Whitefield was refused the opportunity and courtesy of the local pulpit, as he had in so many other places, and chose to address a congregation of local people, out-of-doors. He is said to have preached in a very loud voice with many gestures of his hands and face, often out in the open fields. "Heaven" he believed, "was for Christians not for Catholics or Baptists or Methodists, etc." Rev. George Whitefield first came to America in the year 1738. During his lifetime he returned thirteen times until 1770 when he died in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Oddly, there is nothing written in the records of the Town or of the Wilmington Church to substantiate or verify that the Rev. George Whitefield ever stopped here. Arthur T. Bond, Wilmington's turn of the century historian and a grandson of Joseph Bond the baker, states in his "Souvenir Guide Book", copyright 1904, that "Careful research does not authenticate this legend; and it is extremely doubtful if the Reverend gentleman ever visited Wilmington." Bond goes on to surmise that "The name was probably a sentimental tribute to the man's personality, just as hundreds of elms are connected with the name of our first President, though George Washington may never have been in their vicinity." The Rev. Daniel P. Noyes also failed to mention either Rev. Whitefield or the elm tree in the "Historical Addresses" delivered in 1880.

How George Whitefield came to have his name associated with a particular elm tree on Middlesex Avenue in Wilmington opens the door for speculation. An interesting reference is to be found in Volume I of the Town Meeting Records, dated March 20, 1802. On this day Col. William Blanchard informed the Selectmen of the Town, as was the custom in that day, that "a Mr. John Whitehead, an inhabitant of Great Brittan, directly from there, came to live with him in the month of September last past." Blanchards Inn was situated on the top of Federal Hill, not far from the site of the tree in question. Could it be that this century old tradition concerning the "visit" of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield was based on an inaccurate recollection by one of the Town's elder citizens? It is likely that the arrival of a stranger from Great Britain, whether named Whitefield or Whitehead, would have caused sufficient "stir" in a small closeknit community such as Wilmington to impress the memory of some of its citizens - even for many years. Any citizen past eighty years of age in 1890 could have heard of the event from parents or grandparents.

As the "stranger" walked along the road, perhaps on his way to visit Town Clerk Squire Samuel Eames whose home once stood on the site of the present Reading Co-operative Bank, it is easy to imagine that children as well as adults might appear and crowd about beneath the out-stretched limbs of the old elm tree to listen to this man with his strange manner of speech - whatever the topic of conversation may have been.

In any event, when chosen to decorate the newly designed "Town Seal" the venerable old tree, named the "Whitefield Elm", was evidently dead. On July 5, 1900 Arthur T. Bond wrote: "Tonight, the so-called "Whitefield Elm" has been cut down as it became unsafe for the passerby. The tree measured 16 feet in circumference at the point of cutting - two feet above the ground" and "It stood for nearly if not quite 170 years".

ODE TO THE "WHITEFIELD ELM"

By Arthur Thomas Bond

*Alas! brave elm,
The woodman's axe has laid thee low;
Thy broken branches, prone on earth,
Decayed and rotten, prove too well
That thou wert dead and did not feel
The glittering steel cleave to thy heart.*

*For which, give thanks to Him
Who gave thee strength and life
To buffet with the storms of years,
And watch the generations pass
And see a wilderness become
A thriving, settled town.*

*What tales ye could have told
Of bygone days and struggles, yea,
Of sturdy people bound to wring
From barren soil a livelihood,
What Joys and sorrows, peace and strife
Your eyes have gazed upon.*



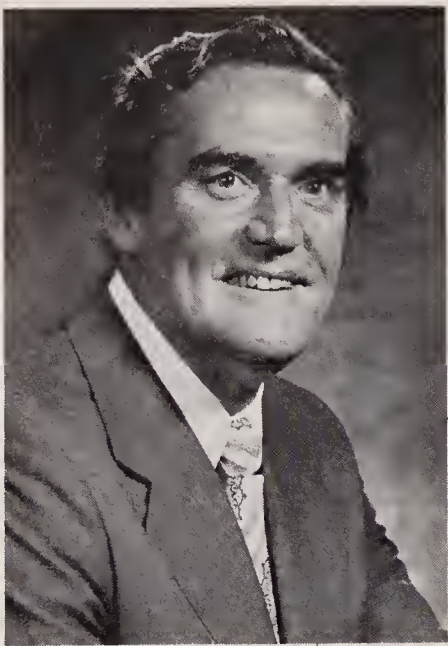
"The Whitefield Elm"



Squire Samuel Eames House

About 1903 the Wilmington Women's Club purchased a monument and a brass plaque which was installed on the site where the so-called "Whitefield Elm" once stood. In an address delivered on the occasion of The Club's Fortieth Anniversary in 1941 another curious reference is given. It was stated that during Mrs. Caleb Harriman's term of office as President the Club placed a tablet on the great Whitefield Elm in North Wilmington where JOHN Whitefield was said to have preached. This marker remained in place until 1949, at which time the brass plaque was stolen from it. Soon afterward the granite monument itself disappeared. In view of the controversy over this point of unproved "history" perhaps it is just as well that it has! Never-the-less, fiction or fact, the tree in the center of the Wilmington Town Seal is still and will continue to be called the "Whitefield Elm".

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EDWARD J. KING
GOVERNOR

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

STATE HOUSE • BOSTON 02133

October, 1979

Greetings:

I am pleased to extend my heartiest congratulations to the Town of Wilmington, upon the occasion of its 250th birthday.

While perserving its history and character, Wilmington has prospered and grown to become a dynamic community. The citizens of Wilmington can be proud of the valuable contributions their town has made to both the community and the State of Massachusetts.

On behalf of all the citizens of the Commonwealth, I extend my best wishes for a memorable and successful day.

Sincerely
Edward J. King

EDWARD J. KING
GOVERNOR

EJK/rm

Joan L. Maga, Chairman
250th Anniversary Committee

North Wilmington



Established southeast of the B.&M. Depot in North Wilmington about 1856, the Tannery of Perry, Cutler and Converse was for many years the Town's largest industrial employer. Caleb S. Harriman, a stepson of Perry, took over operations at the turn of the century.



Caleb S. Harriman

Harriman played a large part in the early 20th Century history of Wilmington. He was chief of the reorganized Fire Wardens in 1904 and was a founding force behind the Water Department and the Mechanics Savings Bank in 1927.



C. S. Harriman & Co. Tannery as it appeared in a drawing made in 1915. Closed in 1950, the Tannery was razed in 1961.

Then



Now

Itek — Middlesex Avenue

The C. S. Harriman (earlier—Perry and Cutler) Tannery occupied the site of the Itek Composition Systems building for nearly 100 years.



1951

1980

WILMINGTON 1730—1980

Being an integral part of the history of Wilmington, ITEK proudly extends congratulations to all who had a part in Wilmington's past 250 years and best wishes for the next 250 years.

PHOTOTYPESETTING originated in Wilmington in 1951 with the introduction of the Photon shown in the top left photo. This anniversary year Itek is producing in Wilmington, the CRT Mark VIII. This advanced typesetter shown in the bottom left photo, incorporates most of the recent developments in electronic technology for the 1980's and beyond.



ITEK COMPOSITION SYSTEMS, 355 Middlesex Ave., Wilmington, MA 01887





Then

Now



Corner of Shady Lane Drive



Engine and Hose Co. No. Two — The North Wilmington Fire Department — stands at attention along the stretch of road pictured above. The North Fire House stood opposite on the grounds of the Tannery.



North Wilmington Depot about 1903 showing the store established by Jonathan Carter 2nd. It was sold to Herburt, Sidney and George Buck and became known as the Buck Bros. Store. The building burned in 1904 and was rebuilt.

For many years the Wilmington telephone exchange was located here — now known as Elia's Country Store.



Buck Bros. Grocery Store and Post Office in 1918

Then and Now



*The original
Boston and
Maine Depot
burned in 1912*



The new B.&M. Depot became offices for Wilmington's home-town newspaper the "Town Crier" in 1955 — owned and published by Capt. Larz Neilson



North Wilmington Shopping Center — 1980



William Sumner Appleton — founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities — made this photograph of the Squire Eames House in 1885. It stood on the present site of the Wilmington Branch of the Reading Co-operative Bank. Squire Samuel Eames was Town Clerk for 38 years as well as a Selectman. He purchased the so-called "1730 House" sometime about 1780 and lived there until his death in January 1834.



One of over 20 homes burned by an arsonist between 1966 and 1970, the Squire Eames House, also called "The Shamrock", was the home of the Tibbetts family when this picture was taken about 1938.



Over 51 years ago, the Reading Co-operative Bank under the leadership of its then president Caleb S. Harriman began operation of a collection agency at the former Mechanics Savings Bank Branch on Main Street.

In December, 1963, a full branch office was established in the North Wilmington shopping area. Construction began in 1975 for the new Reading Co-operative Bank which celebrated its opening in February, 1976, at 352 Middlesex Avenue.



READING
Co-operative Bank
INCORPORATED 1886

180 Haven Street, Reading • 944-0193
352 Middlesex Avenue, Wilmington • 658-3397

Committed to safe, profitable Savings and sound Home Financing. We are proud to be a part of Wilmington's history.



WILLIAM M. BULGER
PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

September 19, 1979

Ms. Joan L. Maga
Anniversary Committee
Wilmington, MA 01887

Dear Madam Chairman:

All of us in Massachusetts join our friends and neighbors in Wilmington in celebrating the 250th anniversary of that historic town.

The Anniversary Committee and all the good citizens of Wilmington can be justly proud of the community's agricultural and industrial past, of its distinguished record of service to state and nation and its promise for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William M. Bulger". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

William M. Bulger
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



Then

*Old North School
around 1900 —
Corner of Salem
and Ballardvale
Streets*



*“NOD” School children in 1905
Five grades were taught by one teacher. Each student had his own chair
but shared a desk and inkwell.*

Now



North Intermediate School now stands on the site of “Nod” Schoolhouse.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN WILMINGTON

By Bernard P. McMahan

The schools of Wilmington seem to be older than the town itself. At the time that the town was incorporated, Samuel Dummer was authorized by the General Court to call the first town meeting in October, 1730 at "the schoolhouse" apparently on the corner of Butters Row and Main Street.

There were four school districts in Wilmington at the time of the Revolution. One for each quarter of the town. There was no schoolhouse at Wilmington Centre, however, until about 1840.

Early in the 1800's each school had a separate committee and was supported by the taxes or subscriptions of the residents of the district. Then a school superintendency committee was established and the Town each year appropriated money which was divided among the districts. One committeeman in each district was personally responsible for the school. He was called the "prudential committee."

Control by the Town over the schools increased until in 1869 the school districts were abolished by state law and public education came of age in Wilmington.

Beginning with five one-room schoolhouses, erected following the points of the compass, and housing grades one through eight, the Town could boast of ten separate buildings and 1050 students by the year 1930. In 1980 there are 4072 students receiving an education in Wilmington.

The old North School, called "Nod School" in the early days because it was located in that part of Town which was referred to as the Land of Nod, was located on the corner of Salem and Ballardvale Streets in 1868. It has since been torn down to make way for the North Intermediate School. The South School, one of four schools once located in the area of Chestnut Street and Butters Row and currently the quarters of the Wilmington Skating Club, was erected in 1894 after an earlier building was destroyed by fire. The second East School, built at the corner of Federal and Woburn Streets in 1847 has in recent years been converted to a dwelling house. The West School, built in 1875, and the last to be closed in recent times, is located on Shawsheen Avenue opposite Aldrich Road. Today it serves as the Audio-Visual Center for the Wilmington Public Schools. An earlier West school building stood for about 100 years across the road on the west corner.

The Centre School house, located on Middlesex Avenue opposite the Common was built in 1839. It became the Town's first library in 1889 and more recently has been a Town Hall Annex. In earlier years a "Select" or High School class was at various times in both the Congregational Church as well as the Town Hall. However, in 1888, the building now called the "Curriculum Centre" was erected and became the New Center School. In the beginning it



EAST SCHOOL CHILDREN in 1888 — The teacher is Miss Abbie F. Sheldon who was twenty years old.



*EAST SCHOOL — 1847
Located at the
corner of Federal
and Woburn Streets
it is presently a
dwelling house*



*WEST SCHOOL — 1875 Standing on Shawsheen Avenue it now serves as the
Audio-Visual Center for the school system*



*CENTRE SCHOOL — 1840 Converted for use as a Public Library in 1889 it has
recently served as the Town Hall annex*



New Centre School — The Town's first multi-room schoolhouse was built in 1888 to provide for both elementary and high school classes.

contained every grade including the High School class. The only other school building which dates to the nineteenth century is the Walker School. Erected in 1896, it was the Town's first four-room elementary school. In continuous service for 84 years it is about to be phased out of existence.

The twentieth century was barely underway when the town built its second four-room schoolhouse. The Whitefield School was built on Middlesex Avenue opposite the site of the so-called Whitefield Elm tree in 1904. A need was soon felt for another new school and this, the first to be built of brick, materialized in 1914. Now called the Swain School, it is located on the corner of Middlesex Avenue and School Street, and was the first school to be erected in the Town exclusively for High School classes. This High School served for sixteen years before undergoing a series of alterations in the nineteen thirties to accommodate an increasing enrollment.

Two portable schools were purchased around 1933, each having two rooms. One was located off Lowell Street, the Maple Meadow School, now the home of the Grange, and the other down by Silver Lake on Grove Avenue which later became the bathhouse on the Town Beach. In 1935, Buzzell School, a six-room elementary school was built. Shortly thereafter, the Silver Lake School was erected, later renamed the Mildred Rogers School after the death of a beloved principal and teacher.

Following World War II, Wilmington and its schools experienced phenomenal growth. Wilmington's population in 1940 was about 4,000; ten years later it was 6,000; by 1960 it jumped to 10,000; by 1970 16,000 and today it stands at about 18,000. Along with the increase in population came a rapid increase in school construction.



Walker School — 1896



Whitefield School — 1904



Walker School



Whitefield School



Wilmington High School — 1920

Although Wilmington needed a new high school in 1930, it did not materialize until 1950, due, in part to the depression years and World War II. The Town wisely purchased the Roman Estate on Church Street opposite the Town Common in 1946 for \$10,000. Included with the land was a house and barn. Construction of the new high school began in February, 1950. The school, which accommodated 350 to 400 pupils, opened the following September. Two additions followed, one in 1956, another in 1959. The school could then handle 1,200 pupils comfortably.

With the opening of the new modern high school the Roman House became the area for Home Economics. The second floor provided quarters for the School Committee, Superintendents office and supervisory staff. Industrial Arts classes were held in the barn, which today serves the Public Building Maintenance Staff of the Town.

It is interesting to note that all three of Wilmington's high schools were built facing the Common, and are still in use today. High school number one

became the Center Elementary School in 1915 and now serves as the Curriculum Center. High School number two became a junior high school in 1950, was renamed the Swain School and used as an Elementary School from 1956 to 1979 and is now the Wilmington High School annex.

The post-World War II period proved to be a prolonged planning and building phase for the public schools of Wilmington. In 1954 Wildwood School opened followed by the North Intermediate and Wilmington's "Round Schools": the Glen Road and Boutwell. Next came the West Intermediate followed by two more new elementary schools, Woburn Street and Shawsheen.

Beginning in the early 1970's a decline in enrollment became a fact to contend with and continuing it has led to the phasing out of several of the oldest school buildings. The Whitefield School became the new Town Hall Annex in 1979 and the Walker and Buzzell Schools, also, will soon be looking for new identities.



*Roman House —
School Administration
Building*



Swain School



Wildwood School



*"Round Schools"
Boutwell and
Glen Road*



*West
Intermediate*



Shawsheen



Woburn Street Elementary School

In the early days of public education in Wilmington students walked to their one-room neighborhood schools. One teacher was responsible for their initiation into the joys and complications of the three "R's". The number of pupils in a given grade would vary from one to several. In a given grade in a given year there might not be any pupils at all. Upon completion of grade eight a pupil could decide to enter High School, which was intended to prepare him for college. Called the "Select School" it occupied one room in the Town Hall for a number of years.

Wilmington's first High School graduating class was in 1874, made up of seven girls and three boys. One could complete high school in three years at that time. J. Ellis Doucette had the unusual distinction in the annals of Wilmington High School of being the sole graduate of his class in June of 1902 only to return to Wilmington High in September and again become the sole graduate in 1903. He was the last person to graduate from a three-year course of study and the first of thousands of Wilmington's young people to graduate from a four-year High School.

The opening of the new high school in 1914 allowed pupils an alternative to preparing for college. They then had the opportunity to follow business courses as well as Domestic Science and Manual Training. These latter two courses, eliminated in the 1920's, returned in the 1950's as Home Economics and Industrial Arts.

The educational opportunities for the youth of Wilmington have broadened greatly from 1950 to the present. Many have attended colleges from coast to coast; and job opportunities have become varied and plentiful. The formation of a Regional Vocational District and the opening of Shawsheen Regional Vocational Technical High School has greatly enhanced the educational opportunities for Wilmington's youth. The Town of Wilmington is currently allotted about 20% of the total enrollment.

From only ten in 1874, the number of graduates from Wilmington High School increased to 100 in 1956, 200 in 1964 and 300 in 1976. Now faced with declining enrollment a program is currently underway to phase out the Swain School, which has been used as the High School Annex. The graduating class of 1980 is made up of 295 students.

Bernard P. McMahon Retired Principal
Wilmington High School



High School



Graduation — 1980

WILMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WILMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE WILMINGTON COMMUNITY

On behalf of the School Committee, the School Administration, Faculty and Students, I take this opportunity to extend to you our best wishes and congratulations as you achieve the milestone of your 250th Anniversary.

Upon reflecting on Wilmington's youth, both past and present, it is indeed fitting to register a well-deserved "Thank You" to a town that has unselfishly dedicated its resources to its youth on a continual basis. One can look with pride to the accomplishments achieved by the students of the town. It is a fitting tribute that many of them have chosen to settle here and to continue to serve the community with the same zest and enthusiasm as that of their parents and friends.

We of the educational community have every reason to believe that Wilmington as a Community will continue to support its educational commitment as it has in the past.

Sincerely,

Lester E. White

Lester E. White, Chairman
Wilmington School Committee

School Committee



Mr. White, Chairman, Mr. Fenton, Vice Chairman,
Mr. Demos, Mr. Tighe, Mrs. McMenimen, Secretary,
Mr. Brooks

Wilmington High School



Baseball Team — 1914

Rear—L. to R. — Norman Perry, Milton Fiske, Lloyd Lewis, Ed Croteau, Howard Bedell, Principal Bates.

Front — Al White, Eldon Durkee, James White, Walter Surette, Henry Porter, Joe Stack, Larry Foley.



Football — 1980



Cheerleaders in action



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

SENATOR ROBERT C. BUELL
1ST ESSEX & MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
WOODCREST ROAD
BOXFORD, MA 01921
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 517
TEL. 727-2600

Committees on
Banks and Banking
Education
Health Care
State Administration
Transportation

To the People of the Town of Wilmington:

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the people of Wilmington upon the occasion of the town's 250th Anniversary.

Wilmington's heritage of contribution to the area and to Massachusetts -- first as a supplier of agricultural products, later as a home for small industries -- is reason for proud celebration.

I am confident that in the course of its continued growth, Wilmington will draw upon the best of its past, while developing its assets for the future good of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert C. Buell".

ROBERT C. BUELL
STATE SENATOR



A HISTORY OF THE WILMINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

*by Adele C. Passmore
Edited by Louise B. Balsler*

Wilmington's first library was in existence at the time of the Civil War and possibly for many years earlier. Called "The Wilmington Social Library", it was a collection of at least five dozen books which were kept in a private home for the benefit of a select group of citizens. Where it was located has not been determined.

For several years prior to 1870 small libraries were maintained in most of the Town's district schoolhouses. In March, 1867, the East School District took note of a balance on hand of \$5.62 and "voted to expend it in purchasing books with such further sum as may be obtained by subscription."

A committee of three men was chosen to purchase books and "manage the affairs of the library". They were Charles W. Swain, Henry Sheldon and Thomas P. Eames.

The first East School librarian was James H. Swain, a younger brother of Charles Swain. In 1868, sixteen year old J. Howard Eames was elected and served for two years.

With the success of the East School library well established, the idea of a "public library" of size and quality became a topic of town-wide interest. Charles W. Swain and Lemuel Cobb Eames submitted an article for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant during February, 1871, requesting the creation of such a facility. The Article passed and the Library opened seven months later, on July 1, 1871. It was located in one of the rooms at the rear of the Town House, our present Town Hall. The following warrant requested that Trustees be chosen and an appropriation made for the purchase of books and supplies. The sum approved was \$200.00.

Charles W. Swain, generally credited with being the moving force between the establishment of our Town Library, was a son of Levi Swain. A prominent citizen of the East School District he served as District Clerk for a number of years. He also served as Town Treasurer, a member of the School Committee and from its inception in 1871 until 1879 he acted as both Treasurer and Librarian for the newly organized Wilmington Public Library.

The members of the first Board of Library Trustees met at the Town Hall, January 13, 1872 with Cyrus L. Carter, Esq. being appointed Chairman, Charles W. Swain, Secretary, and Cyrus L. Carter, Wm. H. Carter, and Charles W. Swain, as a committee to prepare By-laws for the management of the Library.

On April 19th, a notice was posted which read:

TO THE CITIZENS OF WILMINGTON:

The Town, having taken measures to establish a PUBLIC LIBRARY, and elected a Board of Trustees, who have made all needful arrangements for the reception of Books, Pamphlets, etc. which may contribute to the general interest of the people; for this purpose the Trustees will call upon the Citizens of the Town, and receive contributions in aid of the Library.

The interest felt, and liberal spirit already manifested lead the Trustees to believe that very generous donations will be made in money or books which will greatly increase the future usefulness of the Library.

For the Trustees,
L. C. Eames
C. W. Swain
Committee

Wilmington, Mass. April 19th, 1872

Donations to the Library during 1872 numbered 372 books. 106 more were purchased.

The first and largest donation, sixty books, was received from Wilmington Social Library, and the East Centre and West Schools donated additional books. Other donors included Charles Swain, Dr. S. A. Toothaker, Rev. Mr. Buffum, C. L. Carter and Miss Dolly Harnden.

During its second year books were donated by Mrs. A. B. Nichols and others with another seventy being purchased. By this time the Library contained 600 books and catalogues for circulation. The number of persons taking books out during the year was 197 and the whole number lent was 1,149.

In 1873/74 C. W. Swain wrote "Our Public Library now enters upon the third year of its existence. It can no longer be regarded as an experiment, but as one of the permanent institutions of the Town of Wilmington."

The Librarian's salary, first set at \$24.00 per year, was raised one dollar in 1874 although the Town appropriation in support of the Library dropped to \$100.00 at which level it was to remain for a number of years.

Among the periodicals supplied by the "Library Room" in 1875 were Harper's Magazine, St Nicholas, the Boston Journal of Chemistry, and the Woburn Journal.

General Regulations of the Public Library were published in the Town Report for 1878. From these we learn the Library was open only on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m., only residents of the Town over fourteen years of age could use the Library, and no person could have more than one volume at a time. Also, should a person "detain a book longer than one month" he was fined six cents per week.

Swain remained Treasurer-Librarian through 1879. In that year a bequest of \$200.00, the first gift of its kind, was made through the Will of the late Joseph Burnap for the benefit of the Public Library. It was soon followed by a bequest of \$500.00 from Benjamin Buck.

In 1880, 22 year old Arthur O. Buck became Town Librarian and Treasurer. The number of books available for loan had reached 1,590 and the number borrowed was 2,027.

By special arrangement with the librarian of the Public Library in 1883 the High School, which shared the use of the Town House, had the use of all books of reference, and it was the opinion of the School Committee "that the money expended for the library contributes largely to the welfare of the schools."

1889/90 was important in the history of the Town Library. At Town Meeting it was voted to remove the public library to the old Centre Schoolhouse and appropriate money to put it in suitable condition. The tiny one-room Centre School had been vacated on completion of the new four-room Centre School. The sum of \$25.00 was allowed for the expense of moving.



Charles W. Swain
First Librarian

In 1890 Arthur Otis Buck resigned as Town Librarian and his younger sister, nineteen year old Francene A. Buck, took over the last nine months of the year at a 100% increase in salary, the new annual rate being \$50.00. Mr. Buck remained Treasurer of the Library for another decade.

The library was now open every Wednesday afternoon from 3:00 to 5:30 and from 6:30 to 7:30 o'clock. By 1890 circulation had increased to 2,680 books.

A sign for the new Library was supplied by W. J. Appleton. A. J. Whitcomb Co. provided a table and chairs and G. W. Horton was paid \$2.25 for making a case presumably in which to store books.

In 1891/92 Miss Buck received an additional \$5.00 for "copying the catalogue." A total of \$175.00 was expended in that year of which \$87.00 was used to purchase new books.

Miss Buck remained Town Librarian until January, 1897. Miss Emma E. Kellom was appointed to succeed her and she served until 1900.

The Town appropriation in 1899 was \$150.00 but the interest from the Buck Trust Fund added another \$25.00 to the amount available for Library use.

Supplied during the year for reader use were New England, St. Nicholas and Century Magazines.

In 1900 Miss Anna Tolman Sheldon became Town Librarian and retained her position for thirty-eight years. \$250.00 was appropriated for the use of the Library in 1900, the extra money being for the purpose of allowing the Trustees to have the books indexed, etc." in a proper and up to date manner".

By 1904 the Library and lot were valued at \$1,000 and the contents at \$1,800. At Town Meeting in 1904 \$150.00 was voted to put an addition on to the building.

In 1905, \$350.00 was appropriated for the support of the Library; the salary of the Librarian had been increased to \$100.00 per year; Guy Nichols, as janitor, received \$6.50; W. B. Eames was paid \$11.86 for repairing books and Buck Bros. Store received \$4.65 for "oil and supplies". Books and subscriptions brought the total expended to \$260.37.

The number of books taken out in 1906 was 5,008. There were 372 library patrons and 3,396 books from which to choose.

Circulation increased over 1,000 books during 1908. The Town Report states "A majority of the patrons of the library call for fiction, and the ascensions are largely of that class; but each year we have made it a rule to see that a certain amount of the more solid literature is added, and history, biography, description and travel, the popular sciences and general literature are represented".

During 1909 another increase in circulation of 1,000 brought the total to 8,808.



Anna Tolman Sheldon
1900 - 1938

Library use increased only slowly over the following twenty years. By 1928 the number of persons taking books from the Library had not quite doubled. 852 persons borrowed 12,297 volumes. There were now 6,007 volumes in the Library but it is interesting to note that of 242 new books purchased that year only eighteen were non-fiction. The value of the contents of the Library had risen to \$3,000 and the building and lot were valued at \$1,500.

Mr. Edward N. Eames, Chairman of the Board of Trustees reported, "The present library has served the citizens for a great many years and naturally there has been added from year to year numerous volumes, so that at the present time the Library is very much over-crowded. . . ."

"The Town is in no condition to erect a new library. We, therefore, suggest. . . an addition built of sufficient size so that the present quarters may serve. . . until such time as the Town is in financial condition to erect a library worthy of the Town."

The Town Report for 1930 states "Although Town Meeting rejected the proposal to enlarge the library, alterations were made to the interior of the present building. Additional stacks were erected and the interior redecorated. With these alterations it is now possible to add more volumes." Total cost was only \$1,061.

Added to the Joseph Burnap, Benjamin Buck and the Charlotte C. Smith Library Funds was one from Chester W. Clark. The interest derived from these was used to help defray the costs of operation. Also under the jurisdiction of the Library Board at the time was the Sabra Carter Common Fund and the Sarah D. J. Carter Lecture Fund.

On August 29, 1938 the Trustees of the Public Library recorded the death of their faithful Librarian, Miss Sheldon, with profound sorrow. "In her work she was always desirous of improving the Library, of providing worthwhile reading, and extended courtesy, and helpfulness to all who consulted her, or asked her assistance. She was most conscientious in her duties and exacting in her accounting, she served her community well."

After Miss Sheldon's death Mrs. Meriam H. Ware filled in for the remainder of the year and was selected as Town Librarian by the Board of Trustees in 1939.

In 1941 much was accomplished toward making an inventory with the help of the National Youth Administration. A subject file, was started and the shelves were labeled alphabetically. During 1942 several hundred books were sent to the Library for the benefit of the armed forces.

A survey was made in 1948 for the purpose of removing and disposing of all volumes which have no further value. Also, the non-fiction books were rearranged by subject with the fiction arranged alphabetically as before.

Mrs. Ware served as Librarian until 1949 when Mrs. Esther C. Hall was appointed in her place. The Report of the Trustees in that year stated "The Trustees realize that the possibility of new quarters for the Library is very remote. We must try, therefore, to make the present building more suitable and improve the contents for our ever increasing number of users." with much more up-to-date reference material.

During 1950 much was done to improve the Library building. Oil heat and plumbing were installed, a new fence was erected and plans were formulated to have the building painted and the lot landscaped the following year. Also begun in 1950 was a collection of "pocket books" in order to satisfy the demand for western and mystery stories.

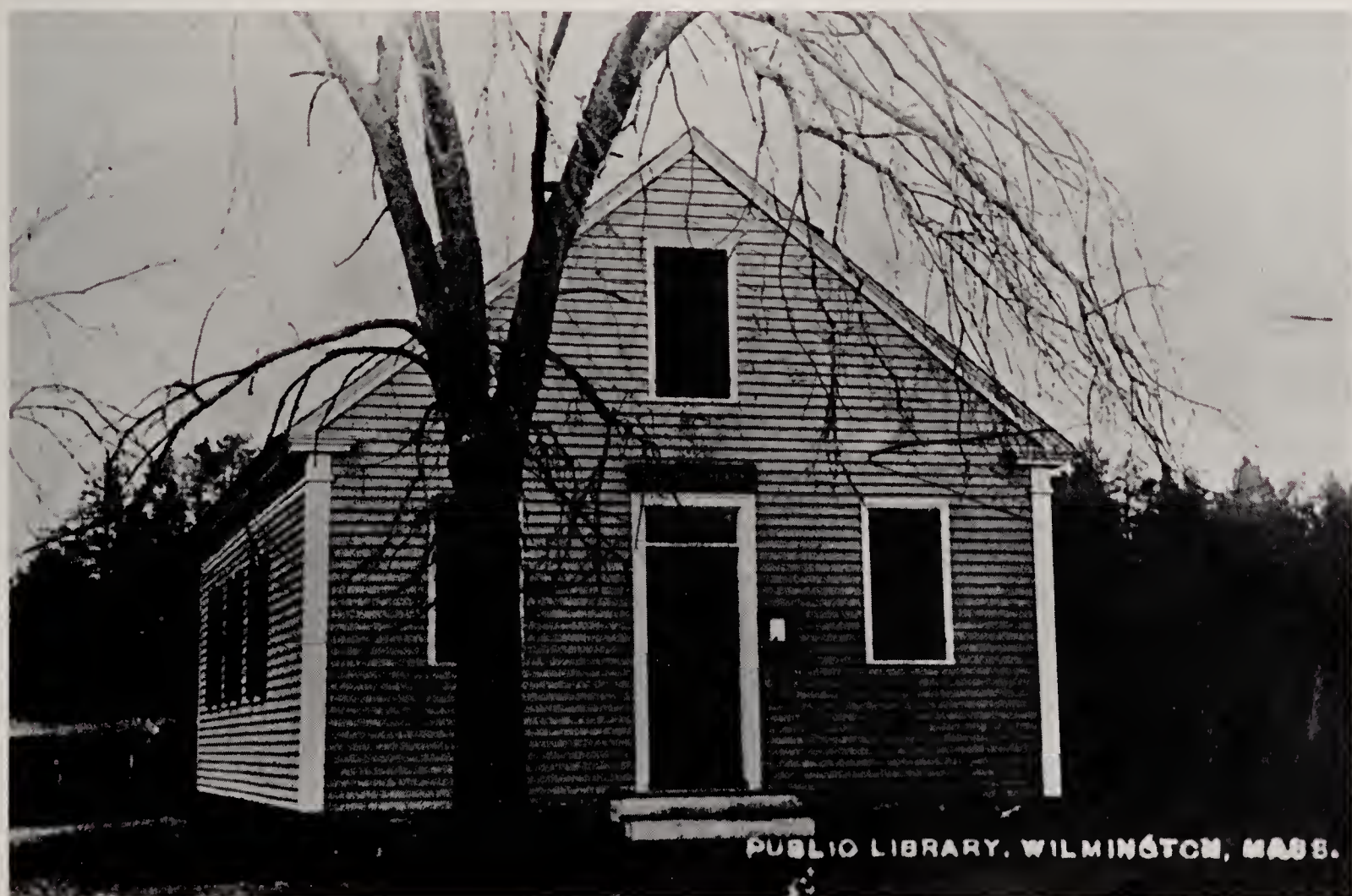
One of the most important and useful services inaugurated by Mrs. Hall was the circulation of books among the various elementary schools in Town, through the establishment, in 1951, of so-called "book corners". The response of teachers and pupils was enthusiastic.

In 1952 because of the rapid growth of the Town and increasing use of the Library's facilities, it became necessary to open the Library for an additional day, each week. Under the new schedule the Library was open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. This change required the appointment of an Assistant Librarian and Mrs. Louise Balser was elected.

There were 9,973 books and magazines circulated from the Library in 1952 and an additional 1,000 between January and June through the schools.

In 1953 the Trustees accepted with regret the resignation of Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Balser. Mrs. Clara Chipman was appointed Town Librarian to replace them. On Tuesdays through Saturdays the Library was now open from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and on Tuesday and Friday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

In 1954 attention was given to development of a record collection which was previously an experiment limited to children's records. The response



was enthusiastic. Reference work continued to increase as students frequented the Library after school hours.

In 1955 the Library was opened four additional hours each week. In September the position of cataloguer was established and Mrs. Balsler was appointed. Circulation in 1955 was more than twice that of 1952. The number of books loaned jumped from 9,462 to 19,089. Also, the number of registered borrowers jumped to 2,467 heralding a decade of dramatic population increases in the Town.

The Massachusetts Division of Library Extension was invited to survey Wilmington's Library facilities and make recommendations for their improvement.

The Merrimac Valley Loan Collection was popular. Consisting of four collections a year, each remained in Town for three months. A number of books were borrowed from other libraries on inter-library loan.

During July and August 1956 five book collections for children were maintained in different parts of the Town at the Dayton, Allard, Moore, Norton and Hall homes — all "Friends of the Public Library". Registered borrowers exceeded 3,000 and there were over 24,000 books circulated.

The year 1957 marked an important milestone in the development of library facilities for the Town. This year arrangements were made for the Wilmington Public Library to join the twenty-eight other libraries in the area to share services of a Bookmobile, which was available to towns with populations under 10,000 as of the 1950 census. The bus was scheduled to make two stops in Wilmington every three weeks. Points chosen were at the corner of Woburn Street and Hathaway Acres and at the corner of Grove Avenue and Main Street by the Lake. Service began in 1958, paid for by a Grant-in-Aid administered by the Mass. Division of Library Extension.

In response to the obvious need for greater services the proposal was made by the Trustees that the Library be opened at least four more hours per week and that a Librarian be employed on a full-time basis effective in April, 1959.

The reference collection was considerably increased and received heavy use. A Story Hour for Children of pre-school age was started in October 1959 led by Mrs. Marie Butler and Mrs. Marge MacDonald.

During 1960 the total book collection of the Wilmington Public Library reached the 50,000 mark. In that year the Library was open 6 days a week.

Much generosity was displayed in the community toward the Library at this time. A trust fund was established by the East Wilmington Betterment Assoc., the income to be used for the purchase of books for children. The Junior Chamber of Com-

merce presented a set of "Encyclopedia Britannica" and the "Friends of the Library" donated chairs for Story Hour and provided window boxes and a Christmas tree. They also held a book fair in November.

Four thousand people were registered as active borrowers in 1961 which represented 30% of the Town's population, at a time when 25% was considered to be higher than average.

"A pleasant innovation was the Open House held at the Library on Sunday, April 16, 1961 by the 'Friends of the Wilmington Public Library', to celebrate National Library Week."

Almost 1,000 new borrowers were registered in 1962. Emphasis was placed on increasing staff to provide more adequate service. In April, Mrs. Ruth Harding was appointed by Assistant Librarian on a full-time basis, made possible by reason of a State Grant to Public Libraries; this grant also permitted the Library to be open an additional 10 hours a week, thus bringing the total up 20½ hours.

Space was by now the Library's most serious problem. Plans to resolve the situation were presented to the Town at a Special Town Meeting in April, 1962. Appropriations to purchase the old St. Thomas Church and renovate it were voted and it was anticipated that the building would be in use in the fall of 1962; however, unexpected legal difficulties arose which prevented the Town from obtaining a clear title to the property and plans had to be postponed. Later the Trustees voted not to purchase the Church for a library but instead to build a new building.

National Library Week was celebrated in 1962 with an Open House which included an exhibit of pictures by local artists and a program on literature and music offered under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth Neilson. In addition a collection of historical books was arranged for the occasion.

New hours were posted: Monday through Friday 10 a.m. - 12 noon, 1:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. and Saturday from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Closed Sundays, Holidays and on Saturday during July and August.

Book circulation reached 61,000 in 1963. The total number of registered borrowers, 4,300, equalled about one-third of the population.

The Womens Club presented a record player to the Library for use with Story Hour and Mrs. Chester Tompkins joined Mrs. Madelyn McKie and Mrs. Marge MacDonald on the volunteer reader team.

A record number of new borrower registrations brought the total to approximately 6,000. Several new bookcases were added in an effort to accommodate more books.

The Library by now contained approximately 20,000 volumes, 400 records and subscribed to 36 magazines. A highlight of the year was a book jacket contest for grades one through six during Book Week in November.

Commencing January 1, 1965 the Library was open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Saturday from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m., an additional seven and one-half hours each week.

Efforts were concentrated on the development of plans for a new library. Library building consultant, Philip J. McNiff, urged that the new building be designed to provide sufficient space for library needs of the Town for a period of 20 years. Based on an estimated population of 30,000 in 1985, he recommended a building of approximately 21,000 square feet.



Clara P. Chipman

Final plans containing about 28,000 sq. ft. were approved by the Trustees in September. The cost, being \$886,400 was too great so the plans were tabled at the Special Town Meeting held in October.

A new ten drawer section was added for the reference catalog, and many older less used books were put in storage to make room for new books.

A Federal Grant of \$500.00 was received for the purchase of reference books. The reference section was being taxed to the limit by commuting college students as well as Public School pupils.

Mrs. Chipman retired on April 1, 1967 after serving 15 years as Town Librarian. She was replaced by Mr. James L. Connors. 80,000 books were circulated during 1967 and 2,685 new books were added making it necessary to store much useful material in other Town facilities. It was felt by the Library staff that the present circulation figures represented a maximum under the existing conditions. The Library Trustees set as their objective for 1967 an intensive effort to bring closer to reality a new library facility for the Town of Wilmington. As a result, the year was one of several challenges.

A Special Town Meeting in July approved the acquisition of additional land for the library site and provided funds for preliminary plans. In November another Special Town Meeting approved the Library plan proposed by the Trustees and authorized the funds to erect a new library building on the site of old St. Thomas Church.

Site preparation began early in 1968. Meanwhile, the book processing operations were moved to rented quarters at the corner of Lowell and Woburn Streets. Here, also, Story Hour continued twice a week with the addition of Mrs. Sullivan to the volunteer reader trio of MacDonald, McKie and Passmore.

A new "charge" system was installed in order to more efficiently serve Library users.

The formal opening of the new Wilmington Memorial Library was in May, 1969 with Dedication Services being held on Memorial Day.

Colonial in design with attractive large traditional windows throughout the new Library opened on May 12th complete with bookcases cheerfully painted yellow and orange to harmonize with orange carpeting on the floors. A Children's Room, Staff facilities, and a large Conference Room for civic meetings occupied the second floor.

In charge of Library operations were Head Librarian James L. Connors with Mrs. Louise B. Balser, cataloguer, Mrs. Janet Small, circulation, Mrs. Beatrice Yankowski, and Miss Suzanne Haven, Children's Librarian.

The Wilmington Memorial Library was the product of a community-wide effort, with the building being financed wholly by Town funds.

When Mr. Connors resigned in November, 1969, Mrs. Chipman was appointed Acting Librarian while the Board of Trustees engaged in seeking a new Librarian and also completed the furnishing of the new facility.

Book circulation increased to 93,533 due in part to the placing of a world of books at the fingertips of the Townspeople in a modern library setting.

In 1970 Mr. Jeremy Slinn became the new Director of the Library. Appointed at this time was professional Children's Librarian, Mrs. Penelope Bornstein.

The Womens Club presented the new library facility with a fine exhibit case, a painting and a number of flowering shrubs and trees for the landscaping.

The reserve book system was reorganized to give better control of requests and an electrostatic copier was installed.

In the fall of 1970 a new weekly afternoon film program for school-age children was implemented.

A start was made in formation of a local history collection of Wilmington materials. Acquisition of publications relating to the Town's history, government, and development was begun and locally found Indian artifacts were gratefully received from Capt. Larz Neilson, Clayton Buck and Mr. James D. Blake.

A circulation figure of 98,298, was reached in 1970. Appropriations and income for operation of the Library were \$101,333. The Library was open 301 days during that year—69 hours per week.

Mr. Jeremy Slinn resigned as Director during the summer of 1971 and Mrs. Chipman returned

more to serve as Acting Director until October when Mr. Philip W. Meriam was appointed.

Mrs. Sarah Rueter replaced Mrs. Bornstein as Children's Librarian and a full-time adult reference Librarian was employed.

When Mrs. Clara Chipman died in 1972, the Trustees voted to name a room in her honor.

Particular emphasis was now placed on the growth and enlargement of the Reference Department, book reviews were frequently published and popular books were made available in multiple copies to better serve the public. Educational games and toys were purchased for the Children's Room. In 1972 a tape cassette collection was started and school visits were regularly scheduled.

The Library celebrated one hundred years of service to the community in 1972. The total population of the Town was by then 17,102. The total circulation of books, recordings, newspapers, and periodicals reached 84,652. Statistics reveal that the Memorial Library reached its highest recorded circulation — approaching 100,000 in 1973.

The public catalogs were "divided" by subject, titles and authors to assist in providing more direct access to library materials and the Kiwanis Club prepared a special bibliography on business and legal information.

With the death of Mrs. Janet Small, Mrs. Yankowski was appointed to succeed as circulation Librarian.

Needed furniture and equipment was added and to meet the increasing demand for parking facilities arising out of public use of the Conference Room, additional space was made available in the Wildwood Street parking lot.

During 1975 the Town's newspaper, the "Town Crier" was indexed to provide access to historical material and this year saw the inauguration of the circulating Art Program.

A grant from the Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission made possible the furnishing of the Library's Historical Room and it was re-named the "Bicentennial Room" during 1976. This room now contains a fine collection of Wilmington's Historical materials and the collection and accessibility to it are viewed as one of the Library's important functions.

Over 10,000 items were catalogued during this year including books, newspapers, records, etc.

The Library's visibility is greatest in its work with the children of the community - the activity calendar being crowded with special events. "Perhaps nowhere else has the Library's traditional image so completely disappeared. It can be said that the children of the Town are acquiring the 'library habit' early, thoroughly, and pleasantly." according to Library Director Philip Meriam.

A detailed inventory of the reference collection was made in 1976 and this confirmed the belief that something needed to be done to prevent the enormous loss of Library materials. The Trustees for-

warded a proposal for a Security and Detection System for the Memorial Library to Town officials.

During 1977 Christina Molesevich, head of Adult Services and the Reference Department with the aid of Elliot Drew, Reference Librarian, responded to 5,522 reference and reader service questions, a 48% increase over 1976.



Library Trustee Philip B. Buzzell

The entire Town was saddened in 1978 by the death of Library Trustee Philip B. Buzzell whose devoted service began in 1931 and spanned 47 years.

Circulation figures reached 130,000 and the Annual Town Meeting for 1978 approved the funding for a library Security and Book Theft Detection System. During the spring and summer the entire staff prepared for the installation of the System. It was completed in late October at a cost of \$28,000.

The Town Report for 1980 indicates that over the two-year period of operation the Library experienced a 91.3% reduction in book losses, and that the book security system more than paid for itself in this time.

Mr. Meriam writes "Wilmington has traditionally supported its library services well as its Library performed its classic role of serving the educational, informational, recreational, and cultural needs of the Town. The use by a diverse clientele of the Memorial Library, its materials, and services is escalating . . . 2,700 new borrowers were registered in 1980 - a 29% increase over 1979."

During 1980 the Library was opened 293 days and 69 hours each week. The population of the Town reached 18,200 while the total Library circulation figure was 137,169.

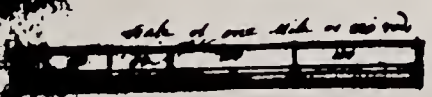
The Board of Trustees states in its Annual report "The people of Wilmington are proud of their Library as evidenced by their continued support over the years. Because of this support, the Wilmington Memorial Library is recognized as being one of the best in the state."

This Plan represents the Town of Wilmington
 the County of New Castle and in some places also
 the City and Port of the said Town of Wilmington
 being bounded by Henry's Creek to the west, the
 Delaware River to the east, the Delaware Bay to the
 south, and the North River to the north. The
 Plan and the extent of the said Town of
 Wilmington in the year 1794 and the
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Wilmington 1794 - Land Survey
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Earliest Official Map
WILMINGTON
 1794



THE STORY OF HARNDEN TAVERN

By Adele C. Passmore

Beside the old Woburn-Andover Road in North Wilmington where Route 62 crosses Woburn Street stands the Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern. The historical significance of this impressive Georgian dwelling, one of the Town's finest 18th century homes, with its characteristic hip-roof was recognized in 1975 when it was accepted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The building, erected before and during the Revolution, has survived in its present form for two hundred years.

The tract of land on which the "Tavern" stands has an interesting history. Called "Lot One" in the "Land of Nod", a name applied as early as 1650 to a section of present day No. Wilmington, its ownership was once traded by Woburn to Charles town. It later fell through inheritance to Samuel Sewell, a man known to history as one of the three judges involved in the Salem "witchcraft" trials. Judge Sewell leased his land in "Nod" for many years before selling the 300-acre tract known as "Lot One" to Samuel Dummer, Esq. in 1726/7.

Samuel Dummer, a brother of Lieut. Gov. William Dummer, Esq. of the Massachusetts Bay Colony was appointed a sheriff of Middlesex County and became Moderator of Wilmington's first Town Meeting when the Town was founded in 1730. He was considered to be a man of wealth, having returned from the West Indies with a retinue of slaves after dealing in rum and molasses. His brother, however, loaned him money to build his home here in Wilmington and he soon established himself as a leading citizen in the community.

Dummer married Mrs. Elizabeth Ruggles of Billerica in 1737. He died suddenly in the following year, apparently a victim of the diphtheria epidemic which was rampant in Wilmington at that time.

The Dummer house is believed to have stood beyond the ridge about 300 feet northeast of Harnden Tavern. It was rented to Samuel Killam for several years after Dummer's death by his widow, Elizabeth, who had remarried. The lot was finally sold to Killam in 1742 soon after he had refused to be sworn to the office of Town Constable, an act of defiance for which he gladly paid his fine.

Whether the original Dummer house was destroyed by fire, or moved to the site of Harnden Tavern has not been determined. There is reason to believe parts of an earlier building could be included in the "Tavern's" structure.



*Historic Harnden Tavern
became Town Property in 1973*

An interesting vote recorded in the Town's first Record Book on March 3, 1755, asked the Town to accept a road laid out by the Selectmen from "Mr. Killam's corner" by Nod Mill to the Reading line - provided Reading open "the way trod by Mr. James Flint." This reference indicates that "Killam's Corner" was an early name applied to the intersection of Salem and Woburn Streets; where Harnden Tavern now stands. Also, the road to Salem was not opened and accepted until after 1755.

How the lot, now reduced to 232 acres, passed from Samuel Killam to Jacob Jones is unclear. However, it could have been acquired by Capt. Ebenezer Jones of Andover Street before 1758 when he was killed in the French and Indian War. In that year all his holdings to the west of Martin's Brook, including land and buildings, were inherited by his youngest son, Jacob.

Fifteen years later, in July of 1773, Joshua Harnden and his wife, Sarah (Corneille), purchased the property from Jacob Jones for 300 pounds. The Harndens, who were married in 1763, had one son, Joshua Jr., and five daughters by 1784 - Sarah, Susanna, Anna, called "Nancy", Rebecca and Clarissa.

It is interesting to note that Joshua Harnden was a great grandson of Richard Harnden, the first Englishman to settle in what is now North Wilmington. Richard's home was located off High Street, in what was then a part of Reading.

The home of Richard's son, John, which stood nearby, was attacked by Indians in 1707. At that time Joshua's grandmother, Susanne, was murdered. His father, John Jr., only three years old at that time, managed to escape unharmed.

At the onset of the Revolution in 1775 Joshua Harnden was thirty-five years old. He became a Sergeant in Capt. Timothy Walker's Militia Co. Five years later, he is listed among the members of Wilmington's committee, formed in 1780, to consider the structure of the innovative Mass. State Constitution. Harnden advanced in military rank until he reached the grade of Colonel not long before his retirement.

Harnden was chosen and became a Selectmen of the Town in 1793. In that day the law required that the Selectmen in each Town provide for the overnight accommodation of travelers as well as proper care and feeding of their livestock. Thus it was that Joshua Harnden volunteered his home to the Town's use as an inn or "tavern".

The location of the house was ideal, being situated at the intersection of two important roads of the day - one leading from Salem to New Hampshire and the other from Boston through Woburn to Andover and Haverhill.

The Colonel's older children had married and left the home but three daughters remaining must have been a great asset in the operation of such a family enterprise.

Taverns were an important part of the business and social life of the community, as well as the place to find shelter, food and drink for the weary traveler. Here was heard the latest news of the world and local gossip as well. Joshua's nephew, a blind boy named Joseph, is said to have played his fiddle at the Tavern on occasion.

One notable man to take lodging at Harnden Tavern was Asa G. Sheldon, the youthful proprietor of nearby "Nod Mill" who mentioned Col. Harnden and life at the Tavern in his autobiography "Asa G. Sheldon, Wilmington Farmer", written late in his eventful life.

The Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern remained a landmark for thirteen years until the Colonel's death in 1807. It has been said that all this time a fire was kept burning on the hearth in the southeast parlor so that its glow might welcome the approaching traveler far down the Salem Road.

After Joshua's widow, Sarah, passed away in 1811, his son, Joshua Jr., who owned a farm on the Ballardvale Road, mortgaged the "Tavern" property to Hezekiah Flint of Danvers for \$2,000. It was later conveyed to John Parker, who in turn sold it to Dr. Silas Brown in 1818.

The Silas Brown family came to Wilmington from Methuen. The Doctor and his wife, Abigail, purchased Harnden Tavern and moved into the house with five children. The oldest, John, was twelve years old. There were four girls; Mary, Abigail, Sally and Nancy at that time. A sixth child, Silas Jr., was born in October, 1818. Three more sons were born to the Brown's during the 1820's. Two children, Sally and William, died young.

The "Tavern" property, once more a working farm, was to remain with descendants of Dr. Silas Brown for one hundred and twenty-five years. In the beginning Doctor Brown managed the farm during the day in order to feed his growing family. However, after the days chores were done he turned more and more to developing his medical practice, eventually tending patients all over Wilmington and Tewksbury.

The Doctor's wife, Abigail Webster Huse, was a granddaughter of Stephen Huse of Methuen, who had been the doctor to accompany Burgoyne's defeated troops across Massachusetts to Cambridge in the fall of 1777. She was in demand when special nursing was required.

Living much as their neighbors did, the Browns were very self-sufficient. They raised their own food and cut wool from their own sheep to spin and weave for their own clothing. Although the Brown's oldest son, John, did not like farming he helped his father until his younger brothers were old enough to take over the chores. In 1827, Dr. Brown bought "Nod Mill", on nearby Martin's Brook, for John to manage.

The old Mill, located where Martin's Brook crosses Salem Street, had been in existence perhaps as early as 1695 when Samuel Sewell assumed ownership of and began to lease roughly one-third of the Land of Nod. The Mill was worked by John until he was seriously injured. John moved his family to Philadelphia and Silas Jr. assumed operation of the Mill which continued to produce lumber throughout the nineteenth century. Nod Mill was consumed by fire in 1899.

Dr. Brown was chosen Town Clerk as well as a Selectmen of the Town in 1824, following the resignation of Squire Samuel Eames who had served in that capacity for 38 years.

As teenagers Mary and Abigail were sent off to Bradford Academy to learn to become teachers; this being about the only alternative to marriage for young ladies in those days.

When Abigail's schooling was finished, she returned to the farm to help her parents. After her mother died, she kept house for her father. There is a story which bears repeating about some very large brown pills which Dr. Brown was fond of dispensing for various ailments. The Doctor's "secret formula" was credited with most amazing curative powers. Dr. Brown would never talk about



Harnden Tavern — The Silas Brown Farm — about 1900

those pills until near the end of his life he finally gave away their secret. They had been made with Abigail's stale brown bread which the doctor had thoroughly mashed in his mortar!

Once the railroad came to Wilmington during the 1830's, another line was proposed to run from Salem to Lowell through the Brown farm. Dr. Brown leased a right-of-way to the railroad company, and a small station was built where the Woburn road met the tracks. The name given to this station was for obvious reasons "Brown's Crossing". Today, though the Salem to Lowell Railroad was discontinued fifty years ago, the old "Brown's Crossing" sign remains, now marking the site of the principal water pumping station for the Town of Wilmington.

Nancy Brown married a Woburn man named Hiram Colburn. He was a "free thinker" in his day, and introduced the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg into the Brown household. Swedenborg was vigorously opposed to slavery and according to tradition, one day Dr. Brown was approached to see if his home could be used to harbor fugitives en route to Canada. Thus, it is believed the old house became a station for the "Underground Railroad" in the days leading up to the Civil War.

Silas Brown lived his entire life on the Brown farm. Although never married, he was a man of many talents. Besides his capabilities at handling the family farm he was able to manage the operation of Nod Mill. Whenever parts of the mill failed Silas not only made the necessary repairs but with creative ingenuity was able to make improvements as well.

Silas also excelled in music. He is said to have made for himself a fiddle, fife, and drum as well as other instruments. It is on record that he could play

several at one time. Silas also played piano and organ and in later years was organist for the Congregational Church. Back in the 1890's the church organ was located at the front of the church to the right as one faced the pulpit. By this time Silas had grown quite deaf; but undaunted he presided at the old organ with two small boys to actuate the air pumps by pushing back and forth on the levers as they sat behind the instrument. Worshipers could see their faces as they peered out during the sermon.

Even though Silas was "deaf as a haddock" he had his list of hymns that were to be sung. When the minister nodded his head Silas would begin to play and the worshipers would join in and sing. Sometimes he would forget to stop and the congregation would wait with good natured tolerance for the additional stanza to be completed. Occasionally Silas continued on and on. The minister would have to leave the pulpit and tap the old man gently on the shoulder. Suddenly realizing he had been running over time, he would often stop in the middle of a line.

Jonathan Brown followed in his father's footsteps. He graduated from Harvard Medical School and took over his father's practice in Tewksbury. Later he became the first superintendent of the Alms House, today Tewksbury State Hospital. Jonathan married Olive, a daughter of Eldad Carter in 1848. He joined the Union Army at the onset of the Civil War and, being a surgeon, was put in charge of a group of doctors under General MacLellan. Unfortunately he was stricken with malaria and contracted tuberculosis soon after. He died in 1867, just three years after his father.

The old house was divided by Silas Jr. and his sister Abigail, who managed their incompatibility "by each keeping to his own side of the house". Money, however, having become a problem after the war, forced them to cooperate. The sheds making up the eastern wing were converted to rooms and rented out for a number of years to summer boarders, an idea which seems to have caught on here in Wilmington toward the end of the century.

In 1890 the entire wing was leased to a niece, John's daughter, Maria Brown Hathaway. Maria, a Philadelphia school teacher, had returned to Massachusetts where she met and married Francis Hathaway, a Boston shoe salesman. She became step-mother of his two children by a previous marriage. Two boys were added to the family, John and George. The latter became a doctor in the Brown family tradition.

After several years, Silas decided to sell his share of the house to Maria. The remaining share was turned over to the Hathaways after Abigail died in 1893. It is presumed that Silas lived out the rest of his life in the so-called "northern ell", which has since been destroyed by fire.

Soon after the Hathaways acquired the old farm, the barn was rebuilt and a carriage house added, which today stands against the ridge which crosses the farm from north to south. Maria Brown Hathaway died in 1929. For many years the old "Tavern" was called "the Maria B. Hathaway House".

Ownership continued in the Brown family until 1943. The house was then sold to a dentist, Dr.

Charles B. Rounds, who resided in it until his death in 1971.

The estate was sold at that time to a developer, who proposed to build apartments or a restaurant and motel on the land. When the Town refused to allow a zoning change, an application was made for permission to demolish the historic building.

Alerted by the local newspaper, the "Town Crier", citizens of Wilmington, anxious to preserve this portion of their local history, appealed to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and were informed of a new Historic Eminent Domain Act.

The Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern was saved from destruction on June 25, 1973 by the citizens of the Town acting at a special Town Meeting when a vote passed in the affirmative to take the old house, carriage barn and other buildings on two acres of land by power of eminent domain. By this action, the Town of Wilmington became the first municipality in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to acquire property for historic preservation utilizing the Historic Eminent Domain Act of 1972.

Acquisition of the Harnden Tavern has presented to the community an unprecedented opportunity to collect, preserve and interpret its local heritage. In cooperation with the local Historical Commission, the "Friends of Harnden Tavern" conduct an on-going program of fund raising in order to enrich the educational value of this irreplaceable Town asset.

THE STORY OF HARNDEN TAVERN
©1981 ADELE C. PASSMORE



Painting by Sonja Maria Carlson shows Harnden Tavern at the turn of the century.

THE WILMINGTON COMPANY OF MINUTE MEN

A History by William G. Meyer

While Massachusetts was a colony under the British Crown, much trouble was caused by Indian tribes raiding outlying settlements. In defense the Colonials formed bands of armed men called Militia.

Every male from 15 to 60 years of age was expected to bear arms and train in units to help repel attack. The Militia Units were called together by a firing of a cannon or by an alarm bell and there was monthly participation in musters and drills.

The Militia Unit in the Wilmington area was called the Second Middlesex County Militia Regiment of Foot. It was made up of Companies from Wilmington, Billerica, Stoneham, Dracut, Chelmsford, Reading and Woburn and was commanded by Colonel Ebenezer Bridge of Billerica.

It soon became apparent that the Militia system left a lot to be desired. Because of its unwieldy organization it was decided that a separate group of militia men, volunteers who could answer any alarm in 30 minutes, should be formed. Called the "Minute Men" this group consisted of one third of the complement of each Militia Company in each township. The Minute Men received 10 half days training in addition to their regular Militia time. They were trained to pursue the enemy and detain him in combat until the Militia Companies could arrive to destroy the enemy force.

Minute Men were issued a flint-lock musket with a steel ram-rod, a carry-all or knapsack, a tomahawk, cartridge box, powder horn, blanket and 36 rounds of lead ball.

The elite volunteers of the Wilmington Seventh Company of Militia formed into the Wilmington Company of Minute Men on March 9, 1775, trained their required 10 half days and elected Cadwallader Ford, Junior, as their Captain.

Due to problems that developed between British Administration and the Colonials in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Regulars were sent out on several occasions into the countryside to enforce British demands. Alarms were sounded on these marches but the British Regulars always withdrew into Boston avoiding confrontation.

On April 19, 1775, however, an unknown rider came through Wilmington early in the morning with the news that the Regulars were marching toward Lexington, the hot bed of the Colonial Cause. An alarm was sounded and the Wilmington Minute Men assembled in their training field on the north corner of Federal Street where it intersects Middlesex Avenue. Equipped with their weapons Captain Ford, along with 26 Minute Men, including Lieut. John Harnden, Sgt. William Blanchard and Sgt. David Beard, three Water Bearers and 20 Musket Men marched off to aid the Minute Men at Lexington.

Along the route they were joined by the Reading and Woburn Companies, and marched "to grand musik of fifes and drums". Somewhere near Bedford an out-rider informed the Officers that the British Regulars had fired live ammunition in a fight at Lexington and were now headed for Concord. The

The Wilmington Minutemen Company in 1971



Left to right: Captain Frank Curley, Lieutenant Warren Sheerin, Waterbearer Arthur Sugrue, Sergeant David Hill, Sergeant Bruce Belanson, Private Norman Thatcher, Waterbearer Willis Whalen, Private Jeff Coville, Private William Meyer and Waterbearer Robert Butters.



Marching Column - 1973

route of March was immediately changed to bring the Minute Men Companies into Concord. Companies from Stoneham and Billerica met the marching units and soon Col. Bridge himself arrived to take command.

Before noon the Minute Men reached Merriams Corner, about one mile from Concord Center. This spot was named after the Merriam family who lived in a house which still stands nearby.

Col. Bridge formed the Wilmington Company behind a stone wall which surrounded the house some sixty yards from the road. The other Companies formed in and behind trees along the road, covering a small bridge that spanned Mothers Brook at the intersection.

Shortly after noon the British Regulars came marching down the road, in good order, three abreast, followed at a distance by the various Minute Men Companies that had fought at the Concord Bridge. The British had positioned flanking companies on either side of the road to act as protection for the marching Main Column, but as they all converged at the bridge to cross Mothers Brook a jam occurred and it was into this closely packed group of troops that the Wilmington Company and others fired. The British, taken completely by surprise, answered with a few shots, but when another well aimed volley of lead ball was delivered by the concealed Minute Men, the British started to run. Merriams Corner was the turning point and from that spot the orderly British withdrawal took on aspects of a rout.

The Wilmington Company ran alongside the road, bypassing the other Minute Men waiting in ambush. They came to a very sharp bend in the road and fired point blank into the Regulars as they rounded the bend. The spot, today, is known as the "Bloody Angle".

By now the Regulars were racing pell mell toward Lexington and running into ambush after ambush. Many threw away their weapons in order to be less encumbered and run faster. Reaching Lexington, the Regulars were ready to surrender when they were saved by a relief column that had been sent out from Boston. The two columns met near the site of the present Lexington Junior High School. Wilmington men occupied a ridge overlooking the road and commenced firing into the combined British units. The British immediately brought up artillery and bombarded the hill. But, finally, the Regulars withdrew along present day Route 2A through Arlington, Somerville and Charlestown to encamp on Bunkers Hill. By this time there were over 4,000 Minute Men and Militia Companies attacking them. Some time during the early morning hours the battered Regulars withdrew into Boston proper and Col. Bridge's Regiment occupied the hill.



Left to right: Waterbearer Dick Pumfrey, 2nd Gunnery Officer Frank Curley, 1st Gunnery Officer Bob Higgins, Larry Parker, Mike Curley, Bob Wright, Captain Bob Varey.

From this point on the Minute Men organization became entangled with the Continental Army and for all practical purposes ceased to exist. Some returned home, some enlisted in the Regular Army, some stayed on and fought as Militia in the Battle of Bunker's Hill, two months later in June, 1775.



Photograph Larz. F. Neilson

THE WILMINGTON COMPANY OF MINUTE MEN

1968 - 1980

On October 30, 1968, the Wilmington Company of Minute Men was re-activated by proclamation of the Board of Selectmen and received a Charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. William G. Meyer was elected Captain, Frank D. Curley became Lieutenant and fifteen men were enlisted.

The Baldwin Apple, chosen to be the Company insignia, is reflected in the Cockade design as well as in that of the Guidon; a gold field with a red apple and green leaves and the inscription "Wilmington March 9, 1775."

Uniforms, consisting of a gold waist coat, Hunter green trousers, off-white full collared shirt, and black shoes, with black tri-corn and Cockade, were first made by the Ladies of the Company under the direction of Dorothy Lafionites.

The re-activated Company followed the Table of Organization of the original Company which had a total of twenty-seven members.

After undergoing basic marching maneuvers and musket drill, the Company made its first public appearance early in 1969 at an open-house held at the High School. Since then the Company has initiated many annual events and its membership ranks have been extended to include nearly fifty men. Each new recruit receives a replica of the Pine Tree Shilling.

In 1974, the Town of Wilmington presented the Company with a meeting place on the grounds of historic Harnden Tavern in North Wilmington. With dedication and a lot of hard labor the Company transformed the outbuilding into a replica of a fort headquarters of the colonial period. An open house was held on March 9, 1975, in commemoration of the Company's 200th Birthday.

On the Sunday preceding Battle Day in April each year, Minute Men in full uniform attend worship services at the various churches in town and on April 19th a contingent marches along Route 62 through Burlington and Bedford to Concord as did the original Company. There, by invitation of the National Park Service, the Wilmington Company becomes part of the Honor Guard at Concord Bridge and joins in the parade.

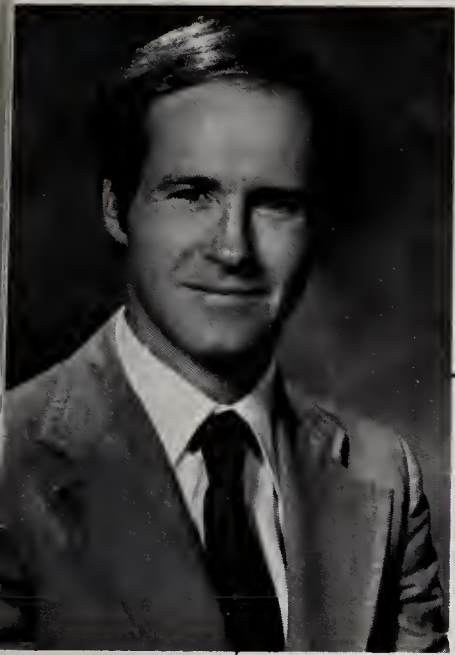
The Company has inaugurated a Liberty Pole Raising Ceremony which is held each year in May complete with colorful parade and a mock confrontation with the "British" at Rotary Park.

In June there is a march to Charlestown to participate in the recreation of the Battle of Bunker's Hill.

Late in June, 1976, several members of the Wilmington Company celebrated the nation's Bi-Centennial by marching over 300 miles to Philadelphia, where they joined the parade scheduled for July 4th in that city. These men were "Brevet Major" Willis Whalen and Privates Peter Wicks, Bob Cooney, George Garvey, Jeff Coville and David Hill. Private Jack Betts manned the supply wagon.

Wilmington is proud that its Company of Minute Men was first to institute a blood donation drive strictly for Minute Men, at Massachusetts General Hospital.

The Wilmington Company of Minute Men enthusiastically promotes interest in Colonial history, especially as it pertains to the ideas and ideals of the Revolutionary War period. It seeks to gather historical information and to perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men of 1775.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

MICHAEL J. BARRETT
21ST MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
62 LINDEN STREET
READING, MA 01867
HOME: 944-9356
OFFICE: 727-4646

Committees on
Taxation
Public Service

ROOM 236, STATE HOUSE

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:
GEOFFREY BECKWITH

To Wilmington:

Congratulations to a uniquely wonderful town and her townspeople, from a neighbor who knows you're special.

I experienced my own Wilmington journey of discovery not too long ago. Campaigning for state representative in the new Wilmington - Reading - North Reading district during the autumn of 1978, I set out to walk every street and avenue in the southern and eastern corner of town, the area encompassed in Precinct 3.

I discovered there is no prettier country lane in all these parts than Chestnut Street. Yet there are no livelier centers of modern business than the plants of Avco and Compu-graphic. I found that Wilmington has neither sacrificed tradition nor avoided the present day. She has insisted successfully on having the best of both ways.

There is no doubt about it--Wilmington has challenges and choices to face in the future, as do all communities. As a state representative for part of the town and an admirer of the whole of it, I look forward to facing them with her.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Barrett
State Representative
Wilmington's Precinct 3

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*Best Wishes To The
Town Of Wilmington*

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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW —

THE CHANGING FACE OF WILMINGTON

By Madelyn A. McKie

Wilmington's growth from a small farming community into a suburb a mere twenty minutes from downtown Boston via Interstate 93 is typical of growth in the United States. In 1900 the typical American lived on a farm, by 1930 in a small town, and today, in a suburb of a metropolis.

Two and one half centuries have passed since the Town was incorporated. It seems fitting to pause and review the past; to recognize those factors which have, and will continue, to affect change; to relate the Town's growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to development in the twentieth century; and to acknowledge how past accomplishments and errors will continue to influence the future. Past decisions have shaped the face of Wilmington just as our actions will be a major factor in the future.

Growth is not as haphazard as it may seem since three major factors stimulate development: accessibility of land, available water supply and sewerage, in that order. Development in Wilmington can be traced to incentives spurred by these elements.

A town of only 1,596 inhabitants in 1900, Wilmington's principal occupations during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remained agriculture and animal husbandry. A bustling community of 18,200 in 1980 with 40% of its financial base in industrial properties, Wilmington's growth has created a more stimulating way of life while at the same time has introduced urban problems formerly the concern of cities alone. The critical issues of environmental control, transportation, housing, solid waste disposal, water supply and quality, and sewerage are now shared by many communities throughout the Greater Boston area, Wilmington among them.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

Once the early settlers cut their way through the forests they found stretches of rich farmland with an abundance of water in the lowlands which formed the headwaters of the Ipswich River. Many of the uplands contained good agricultural soil and with 26% of the Town in wetlands, the rivers,

swamps and high water table provided plenty of water for both domestic and farm use. The flat, rolling terrain provided easy access and so they settled here.

Unlike most other towns, settlement in Wilmington was scattered because of the many streams and extensive wetlands. The better agricultural lands were found along Main Street, Middlesex Avenue and Woburn Street so it was in those locations that the first homes were built. Records indicate that the Town grew at a relatively slow stable rate during its early years.

THE MIDDLESEX CANAL ERA

Excavation for the Middlesex Canal began in 1795 with the route generally following the pre-glacial course of the Merrimack River, spanning the length of the Town from south to north slightly west of its midsection. It was opened in 1803 from Boston to the Merrimack River near the site of the present city of Lowell. The 1820's saw the Golden Age of the Canal when lumber, foodstuffs and granite came to Boston from as far north as Concord, N.H. in return for manufactured goods. It also furnished a superb sightseeing trip for city dwellers.

A slight flurry of development occurred near the Congregational Church during the construction of the Canal but no noticeable increase in population can be credited to the Canal itself, probably because its primary function was that of a supply route.

By a strange quirk of fate, the Canal contributed to its own demise. Canal boats transported the granite for the ties of the first railroad and the engine for the locomotive to Lowell for assembly. Despite attempts to stop the railroad, it was built by 1835 and so the Canal's Golden Age came to an abrupt end. By 1859 the Corporation was dissolved and its charter revoked by a decree of the Supreme Judicial Court.

Presently designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, efforts to restore the salvageable portions are underway. The stretch adjacent to the Fred F. Cain bridge was re-built at the time the bridge was constructed in the early 1970s.

Old Middlesex Canal



1980

*Remnant of
Canal from
Lake Street
Crossing*



Remains of Shawsheen River Aquaduct



Reconstruction of Canal beneath Fred F. Cain (Route 129) Bridge

THE RAILROAD AGE

The latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century can be called the Railroad Age. The "Iron Monster" as it has been called, had a much greater effect upon the growth of Wilmington than did the Middlesex Canal. The Boston & Lowell R.R. line almost paralleled the Canal and being much faster, more comfortable and less affected by weather made it possible to go back and forth from Boston with relative ease.

By the mid-1880's four stations on four different railroad lines were located in Town, making it accessible to the waterfront and associated inner-city jobs of Boston as well as to the mills and lumber operations of Lowell, Portsmouth and other points north.

Interestingly enough, many blue-collar workers, engineers, firemen and road workers and their families settled here. Major development occurred at Buck's Corner (Woburn and Wildwood Streets), called "The City"; Middlesex Avenue from Federal Street to Salem Street and the Church Street area from Main to the Common.

THE STREET RAILWAY INTERVAL

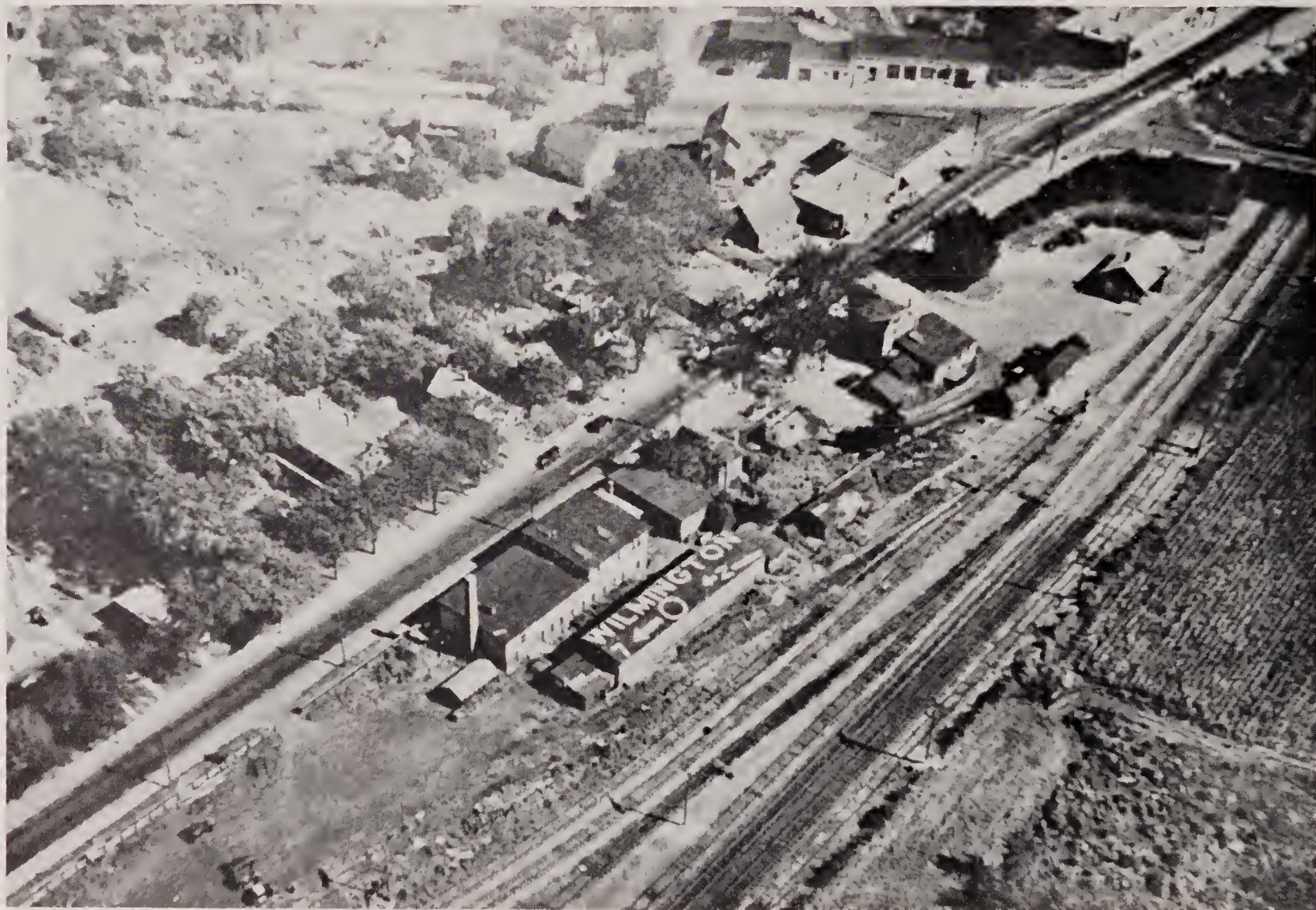
Street railways had an immense impact upon the development of Wilmington. With the railroads, they changed the work force from self-employed farmers and artisans to dependent workers and, ultimately, caused the change from a largely Anglo-Saxon society to a pluralistic population.

While the railroad brought many of French-Canadian extraction, the street railway brought people from the "City" as it was called; Charlestown, Somerville, East Boston and Roxbury, to name a few. Many of these men worked as long-shoremen at the docks of Boston Harbor while others worked for the railroad. It was a common sight to see a man walking with a hook over his shoulder - a mark of prestige, the hook was used to move crates.

In 1892-3 the first street railway line was constructed from Reading to Billerica, down Lowell Street to the Square, across the railroad tracks along the Canal towpath to Shawsheen Avenue and then to Billerica. Two lines from Woburn, one which looped through Wilmington and another that ran through Tewksbury to Lowell were operating by 1895. The last lines were discontinued in the early '30s and remain a memory to older residents.

Aerial View of "Wilmington Square" in 1947 —

showing the Police Station on Church Street (upper right), the Boston and Lowell Depot and trees along the east side of Main Street.





The "Iron Monster" made Wilmington accessible to the job market in Boston and Lowell.



Fred Roberts Estate — "The Boulders" on Burlington Avenue



Late nineteenth century development along Church Street



*Bucks Corner
Woburn Street
at Wildwood*



Open trolley car at Perry's Corner

A street railway line came up from Woburn and ran by way of Main, Church, Wildwood and Woburn Streets to Perry's Corner at Lowell Street. Here the motorman reversed the car and returned to Woburn along the same track.



John Perry's Blacksmith shop stood for over 100 years on the southwest corner at Woburn and Lowell Streets.

All this readily available mass transit drastically changed this sleepy, little agricultural town by sponsoring the birth of suburban development and real estate speculation. The bulk of development occurred in the Silver Lake area, Glen Road and its side streets, the Main Street area from Clark Street to the Lake, the business area from Clark Street to the point where Routes 129 and 38 divide, the High Street area called "The New City" and the Woburn Street area south of Lowell Street.

In the early 1900s the face of Wilmington began to resemble a summer resort - especially in the sections surrounding Silver Lake and Federal Street. Out-of-town real estate entrepreneurs bought and subdivided large tracts of land into innumerable small lots which they sold for summer homes using high-pressure sales and give-away programs and the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway Co. organized excursions to Wilmington. One can picture a balmy summer day, happy crowds of people singing as they rode on open-air trolleys coming to the country for picnic lunches, swimming in the Lake, games for the children and dancing for the adults. During the course of the day they were shown towering pine groves that were available for sale and would buy a lot or two. Some of the lots were only 15 to 25 feet wide but were affordable since they could be paid for with a dollar down and a dollar a week.

A true sense of comradeship developed among these summer visitors as they built their "camps", which they dubbed their modest cottages. Together they collected the wood used as crates until there was enough to hire a team of horses and a wagon. Once the wagon was loaded and the wood brought to Wilmington, each family helped put four walls on piers, top it with a roof and, with a final flourish, affix a name to the front of their freshly-painted accomplishment.

One can readily imagine the hodge-podge that ensued. These were not experienced builders. There were few surveyors to make sure that the buildings were properly sited on the lot to guarantee that they had left enough room on each side to provide access to their back yards. Plot plans, when they did exist, were primitive. There were few building codes and only part-time inspection of buildings to assure fitness for human habitation. These hit-or-miss projects duplicated street names in addition to the other problems they caused. Every development contained a Pine, Oak or Maple Street. Later, in the 1950s, 157 street names were changed so that mail could be delivered and visitors could be saved the frustration of finding a particular Maple Street.

Over-development didn't appear to be a great problem in the summer, the dry season of the year. Dirt roads were dusty perhaps and frequently muddy if there was a prolonged wet spell. However, by Fall the little camps were closed and the crowds went back to the city, much to the relief of the year-round residents.

Meanwhile the Town itself was growing. By taking a look at the population growth it is readily apparent that the building of the railroads and street railways through Wilmington had a great effect on this growth. In 1890 the population was 1213 and had swelled to 1858 in 1910, an increase of over 53%. Additionally, several fine homes had been built in the late 1800s such as the Hiller House, now an office building at the rear of Bay Bank Middlesex on Main Street. "The Boulders" on Burlington Avenue was built in 1912 by the owner of the Apollo Candy Manufacturing Co. who had amassed 88 acres by 1915. This exceptional home can still be seen opposite Roberts Road although much of the acreage has been sold. The need for additional municipal services began to be felt. The late 1800s saw school expansion with the first high school completed in 1888. Two other four-room school houses soon followed, the Walker School in 1896 and the Whitefield in 1906. The 1914-15 Town Meeting formed a committee to negotiate with the Town of Reading to provide electricity to Wilmington and in 1927 the Water Department was established.

The downtown area had changed as well. By the "Roaring Twenties" a popular open-air dance pavillion, Thompsons Grove, operated where St. Dorothy's Church is located now. Some of the more notorious bars doing a booming business along Main Street were the Black Cat, the Rainbow, the Blue Terrace, Ann's Duck Farm and the Ritz. Wilmington became the place to go when one wanted to have a "good time" and this was the reputation the Town was to retain until the post-World War II years.

The stock market crash in 1929 and the Great Depression of the 30's effected another change in the complexion of the Town. Many of the summer residents could no longer afford to pay rent for their winter apartments along with taxes on a summer retreat. Consequently, they packed their belongings, turned their camps into year-round homes and, in some instances, enlarged them or insulated them with newspapers to withstand the rigors of the winter.

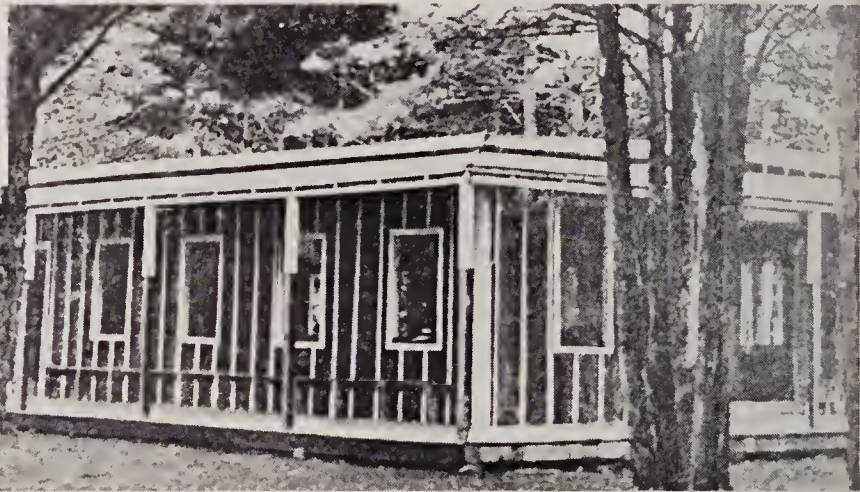
Many of these conversions proved disastrous. Because so many families were living in such close proximity to each other with little regulation, the wet ground was unable to meet the demands. Cess-pools over-flowed and muddy roads became quagmires. Pollution was rampant. People began to demand services. They were no longer content with the horse and wooden plow that packed the snow down more than it pushed it aside. In the spring, roads became virtually impassable. They now needed paved roads as well as municipal water, electricity and, of course, children required schooling.

The impact of this migration caused Town Meeting to react. In 1930 the first Planning Board was formed and in 1934 a Zoning Bylaw was accepted. However, it was too late for the Lake area and some other parts of the Town - their physical characters had been established!

Silver Lake



Union Ice House



Dance Pavillion —
Thompson's Grove



Grove Avenue
Cottages



Then



Now

Silver Lake
from Lake Street



Grove Avenue



The Melzar
Place



Main Street

The concerns of the residents are quite obvious in the wording of the Purpose of the bylaw which reads in part: "To promote the health, safety, morals, convenience and general welfare of its inhabitants, to lessen the danger from fire and congestion, and to improve and beautify the town. . .". The entire bylaw is heavily protective of residential areas. In conjunction with this action, a Board of Appeals with regulations for its conduct was established, as was a Building Inspector and provisions for subdivision plans and occupancy permits.

This zoning bylaw established 10,000 square foot lots with 100 feet of frontage required on a street. Fifty foot lots were allowed to be built upon only if the owner had no adjoining land. One can conclude that this was an attempt to solve the small lot problem but it was not until September 18, 1969 that Chapter 438 of the General Laws, an act created especially for Wilmington, finally stopped indiscriminate building on these small parcels of land.

The trolley lines and the influx of the new residents had other side effects. During the early part of the twentieth century new religious and social organizations in addition to commercial development in the Square near the railroad station became an important part of community life.

THE AUTOMOBILE AGE

Because the late '20s and early '30s can be considered the birth of the Automobile Age, the 1934 zoning bylaw contained a section called **Automobile Related Uses** which regulated auto-related businesses such as gas stations and repair garages including driveways leading to them. Until this time gas pumps were installed by the side of the road and immediately adjacent to it. Artist Norman Rockwell has depicted them in many of his paintings. As late as the early 1950s a small variety store with a gas pump outside was located at the corner of West and Lowell Streets where a modern gas station exists today. Another was located in front of a grocery store across from the North Wilmington railroad station with another at Grove and Main Streets. One can imagine the kinds of traffic problems these roadside pumps caused! The 1934 bylaw attempted to alleviate this condition by requiring pumps to be no less than 15 feet from the edge of the road.

Another traffic problem was beginning to plague residents in Wilmington Square which was the principal shopping district and, again, the citizenry reacted. In November, 1931, a bypass was proposed for the first time. The alignment was approximately the same as those proposed in the 1957 General Plan Report, the 1960 Urban Renewal Project, the 1970 Comprehensive General Plan Report and again, in the late '70s, by the Mass. Department of Public Works. The 1931 proposal ran from Lowell Street on the south, resembling an extension of Main Street, and rejoined Main Street in the vicinity of Glen Road. At that time, the landowners along

the proposed route were willing to donate the land for the highway but for some reason it was never constructed nor was the land preserved for future use. Later designs proposed shorter routes, ending slightly north of Clark Street.

The Town developed slowly and steadily during the thirties and forties. For two decades the zoning bylaw, the depression and World War II had stopped most speculative development.

A general Town bylaw was adopted that prohibited the sale of liquor except in package stores. Roads were widened and paved slowly, a few schools were built and water and electricity were extended to various parts of the Town by small annual appropriations at Town Meeting.

The Roaring Twenties were replaced by the depression years of the thirties which gave way to the grief and sorrow of the World War II years and, hence, another era came to an end.

THE FLIGHT TO SUBURBIA

The building boom following World War II spurred by Federally guaranteed mortgages with lower interest rates for veterans brought many more new residents to Wilmington. The population exploded from 7,039 in 1950 to 12,475 in 1960 and 17,011 in 1970.

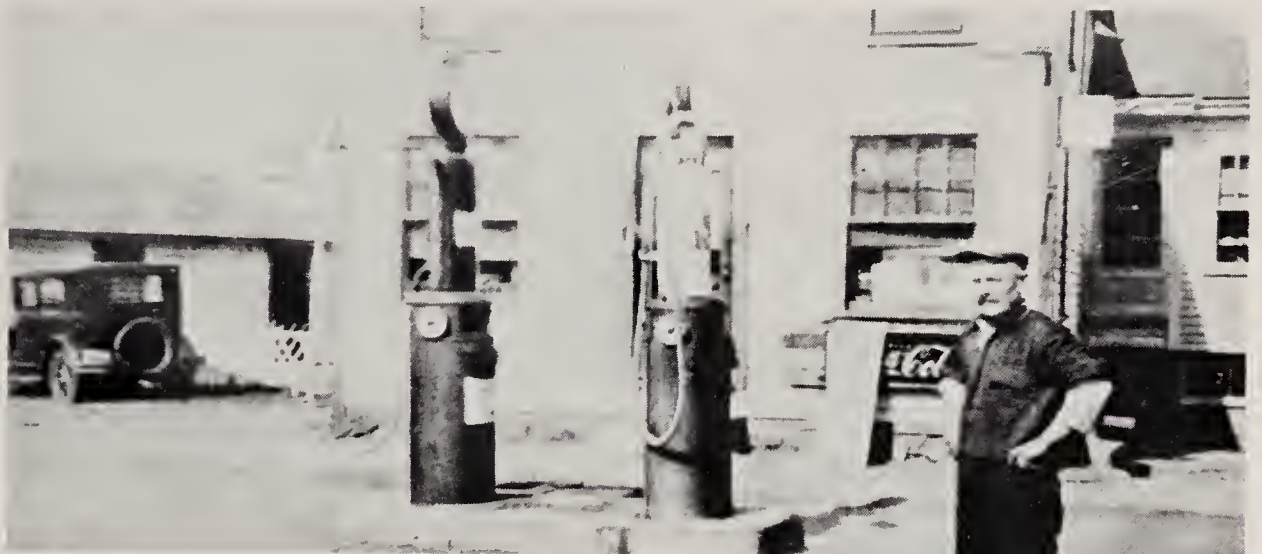
The Town voted in 1950 to adopt the strong Town Manager form of government which controls Wilmington today. Chapter 592 of the Acts of 1950, Wilmington's Town Manager Act, replaced a government conducted by three selectmen and many elected boards. The Charter remains virtually unchanged today although action during the fifties and sixties created a Housing Authority, a Redevelopment Authority and a Regional Vocational Technical High School representative, all elected positions.

The battle that ensued over the change in the form of government saw the Town divided into two factions, the long-time residents versus the newcomers. The new arrivals, mostly young married couples buying their first house, demanded more expert, professional government, more municipal services and an up-graded school system, all of which would raise the tax rate. Predictably, the natives declared, "If you want all those expensive things, go back to the city and leave us alone"! Conversely, the newer residents formed neighborhood groups: the Baldwin Civic Association, the North, East and West Wilmington Betterment Associations, banding together in their attempt to secure water mains, paved streets, sidewalks and other improvements and services. A short time later, during the mid-fifties, the Town Meeting adopted legislation to allow betterment assessments to pay for these improvements, thereby reducing the impact on the tax rate.

New Town bylaws were voted in 1952 and revised in 1972 which regulate, among other things,

Corner of West and Lowell Streets

Then



John C. Elia
1935



Now

A modern gas and service station has replaced the old corner variety store and fuel pumps operated for over 30 years by the Elia family.



Interstate Route 93, open by 1960, provided almost instant access to the Town of Wilmington and its undeveloped land via four highway interchanges.

Deming Way —
Elderly
Housing



Biggar Avenue
off Salem Street

Veterans Housing —
Wildwood Street



Roberts Road off Burlington Avenue

the Town Meeting, Finance Committee and provide for Police Regulations.

Lack of affordable housing was an issue in the early fifties that captured the attention of the Town Meeting. Land was purchased by the Town on Wildwood Street and a series of single-family homes were built in order to "give the returning veterans a start" by making them available for rentals to veterans. Later these houses were sold to private citizens. The new Housing Authority constructed the Deming Way project during the mid-fifties, a publicly-subsidized housing development for low-income elderly containing forty units and a social center.

Again there was talk of a bypass road for the central business district and an Urban Redevelopment Plan was formulated but after several years of study and much controversy, the Town Meeting refused to accept it.

Next came an era of professional studies. In 1955 the Zoning Bylaw was changed radically to keep pace with the changing face of Wilmington. A building moratorium in 1954 allowed time for the bylaw to be written. Widely hailed as a model, *The Saturday Evening Post*, a national weekly magazine at the time stated: "Wilmington, a moderate income town, lying to the north of Boston, has produced one of the most comprehensive forward-looking zoning bylaws to be found in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and perhaps in the whole United States."

Hathaway Acres is a graphic illustration of the effect of the new bylaw and subdivision control regulations which were also re-written. The first

section, off Woburn Street to Gunderson Road, was built under the old provisions on 10,000 square foot lots with 100 feet of frontage on narrow, winding roads. The rear section and the adjacent Marie Drive development was constructed after 1955 on wider streets with larger lot sizes of 22,500 square feet and 125 feet of frontage.

In 1957 a General Plan Report outlined actions for future growth. A Schools and Recreation study was produced in 1960 which recommended new, larger neighborhood-oriented schools and proposed coordinated recreation programs under the direction of a professional recreation director. This was followed by several water and sewer studies as well as a police and fire study which resulted in a combined police/fire station. As both forces grew, this proved to be unsatisfactory and at the present time the police occupy a separate facility on Adelaide Street while the fire department remains in the original building. In the sixties a library study culminated with the opening of our present library in 1969.

During the fifties many plans were generated by the State concerning the construction of an alternate Route 28, a super-highway from Boston to the New Hampshire border. Once more, as had happened with the Middlesex Canal and the railroads, the route was planned through Wilmington following the valley of the pre-glacial river primarily because it was felt that the flat topography would help to control costs.

By 1958 construction on I-93, as it was now called, was going full blast in Wilmington and the "Road to Rockingham" as it was called by some, was opened about 1960 with four partial cloverleaf intersec-



Looking South along Main Street through the "Square" in 1980. Overhead electric and telephone wiring replace the many shade trees.



*Charles River
arrived in
1952*



Route 125 was extended into Wilmington



*AVCO carried the
M.D.C. sewer from
the Woburn line
and moved into
Town in 1959*



Traffic congestion in "Wilmington Square" — the intersection of Routes 38-129 and 62 — is a pressing current problem

tions within the Town. Its impact on Wilmington was apparent almost immediately. Travel time to Boston was reduced to less than half an hour. Previously inaccessible, undeveloped land became available at relatively low cost. Again, another era came to a close, since the highway's impact on the railroads was the same as theirs was on the Middlesex Canal . . . and so the townscape began to undergo another change.

THE SPACE AGE

The research and development age of the sixties and seventies was upon us. New businesses needed space as did older ones that were expanding. Both looked to the suburbs and offered attractive prices to owners of once-agricultural land. Farmland disappeared quickly. Planners warned communities along the route of the new highway not to make the same mistakes as had been made on the older Route 128 - over-development of land adjacent to the highway that created overly-congested local feeder roads and interchanges.

Route 125, which had formerly ended at Route 28 in Andover, was extended to Salem Street at the time I-93 was constructed. The northern industrial district was expanded in 1961 and again in 1965, both north and south of R-125 and the Town laid water mains in the area. Meeting the requirements of availability, accessibility and adequate water supply brought increased land sales and the once-open farmland became a thriving industrial area.

Major industrial development occurred in Wilmington during the sixties and seventies. However, some early forerunners were: Greer's on Route 38 near Eames Street, presently occupied by Abcor, Inc.; Raffi & Swanson and Charles River Breeding Laboratories both arrived in 1952; Unit Packet, which has been bought by Diamond Crystal Salt Co. first located in the Square immediately west of the railroad in the mid-fifties; and Avco, which extended the MDC sewer main from the Woburn line to its location at Woburn and Lowell Streets at its own expense, moved into their garden-type complex in the spring of 1959. An industrial complex off Middlesex Avenue opposite the Whitefield School was completed in stages on the site of the former Harriman Tannery after repeated attempts to re-zone additional land through to Concord Street.

1964 saw the establishment of the Conservation Commission as citizens became concerned about filling and building on the extensive wetlands. Voters agreed that important open spaces and wetlands should be preserved from the onslaught of the bulldozers. A land acquisition program was initiated by the Town which purchased land for conservation and recreation purposes, more up-to-date subdivision regulations were written, and the Town dump off old South Main Street which had been polluting a portion of Maple Meadow Brook was closed by the

State Department of Environmental Quality Engineering.

In 1965 four industries: Avco, Greer, Sweetheart Plastic and Raffi & Swanson donated a total of \$8,000 to be matched by the Town for seed money for a Federal Planning Program. Ultimately, the Town received authorization for \$30,000 to underwrite the costs of a Comprehensive General Plan (commonly called a Master Plan). It took approximately four years under the guidance of Professor Charles W. Eliot to complete, yet very few of its recommendations have come to fruition to date.

A Town landmark, the Harnden Tavern, changed hands and the new owner applied for a demolition permit to destroy it. Historical buffs as well as other voters concerned about the Town's heritage stormed into a Special Town Meeting on June 25, 1973 and overwhelmingly voted to take the Tavern by eminent domain to preserve it for posterity. Wilmington was the first community in the Commonwealth to utilize that State law which permits a municipality to use the eminent domain procedure to acquire property for historical purposes. It has since been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is presently maintained by the Town as a local heritage museum. A volunteer organization, The Friends of Harnden Tavern, sponsors events in an attempt to raise money to purchase furniture and artifacts to depict life in the 18th and 19th centuries.

An Historical Commission was established at the same time the Tavern became Town property, June, 1973, which is authorized by State statute to catalog historical properties and to establish historical zoning districts, if the Town so desires.

Other major actions of the '60s included the construction of the first industrial subdivision with municipal sewerage adjacent to I-93 between Woburn and West Streets in the southern part of Town, establishment of a construction program for tennis courts in various parts of the Town and a sidewalk construction program as well as new parking regulations. A Council on Aging was established to address the needs of Wilmington's senior citizens.

Several attempts to rezone for hotels, motels, apartments and an arena (on Concord Street and I-93) were rejected by the voters. However, a proposed stadium adjacent to I-93 near Charles River Breeding Laboratories was approved but never constructed.

The 1970s brought even greater industrial expansion in both the southern and northern industrial areas. Another off Concord Street east of I-93 was rezoned in the 60s, has developed and is just about complete.

Route 129 is still in the planning stages. Through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the Department of Public Works hired the consulting firm of Barnes & Jarnis to study various



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alternative routes. Although the final plan has not been made public at the time of this writing, rumor has it that the recommended route will not be a bypass for the center of Town but a widening of Routes 38 and 129 with an overpass for Route 62 and a depressed Main Street at that intersection.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Historically, commercial development in Wilmington has been sparse and continues to be so. "Mom and Pop" stores which had been scattered throughout the community have been replaced with convenience food chains. Essentially, four shopping areas serve 18,200 residents in addition to the out-of-town employees of the many industries located in Town.

Gasoline stations and automobile sales rooms line Main Street from its junction with R-129 to its point of departure, interspersed with a smattering of small, frequently changing commercial enterprises. The downtown business district no longer serves as the hub of the community, although trains still stop on their way between Boston & Lowell. The depot has been converted into a fast-food take-out establishment.

CURRENT EVENTS

Water supply and quality has become a great concern of the eighties. Three wells were closed in 1979 by the State because of contamination. A water treatment plant is presently under construction which may relieve the problem while enforced conservation via summer watering bans stretch dwindling water supplies here and in other communities in the area.

A major sewer construction program, called the Silver Lake Interceptor, is presently underway which will extend sewers to the central, western, Silver Lake areas and northern industrial Ballardvale Street section of Town.

Housing is another concern as we begin the '80s. Single-family homes comprise the major housing stock of the Town. The average selling price in Wilmington is \$60-70,000 while the real estate tax rate is \$80.50 per \$1,000. According to a national survey, only 7% of the work force in the United States can afford to buy a single-family home today. Faced with this dilemma, the Housing Authority proposed the addition of 125 units of publicly-subsidized low-income housing but this proposal was rejected by the voters on December 8, 1980. The Planning Board has proposed multi-family zoning (PRD) which the Town Meeting has rejected several times. This zoning district would have allowed homes to be built in closer proximity or attached to each other, clustered around a public or semi-public open area. Now that municipal sewerage is being constructed, it is possible that many objections may be overcome.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to describe how Wilmington's growth reflects the original or basic characteristics of the Town, its history, the investments and commitments of the past and to relate them to those factors which influenced that growth.

Four major tributaries of the Ipswich River with the swamps along them have divided the uplands into neighborhoods. The order of settlement of the uplands also has reflected the soils -their value for agriculture or their ability to absorb sanitary wastes from building developments.

The patterns and shapes of the presently developed areas reflect these physical conditions and features, the controlling forces at the times of settlement and development, and the timing and types of transportation facilities and municipal services which have been provided.

Transportation facilities in successive periods of Wilmington's history have been a third major factor in the location and timing of development. The Town's present patterns can be traced to the earliest roads, to the construction of the Middlesex Canal and to the several railroads which traversed the area in the middle 1800s. The Street Railway Era also provided routes across Wilmington from Boston to the Merrimack Valley and provoked a rash of speculative subdivision projects. The Automobile Age required new and wider roads and expressways as well as parking areas. The rapid growth of industry near I-93 is evidence of the importance of transportation facilities.

Construction of the sewer will bring new opportunities as well as problems in the future. Development will be stimulated in areas which up to the present were retained as open space because of their wetness. The transfer of water through the sewer main into Boston Harbor will reduce Wilmington's water supply while denser development will increase the demand for water.

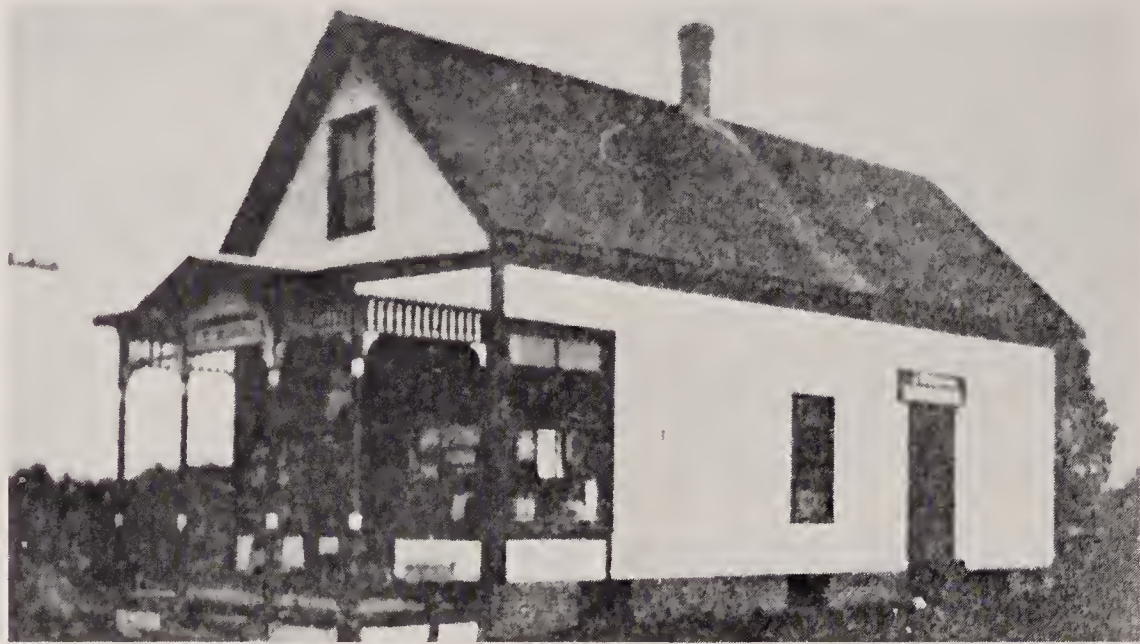
No more appropriate conclusion can be found than the words of Professor Charles W. Eliot in the 1970 Comprehensive General Plan:

"In every community - as in every individual - there are both yearnings for the past and hopes for the future - the desire for security and continuity and at the same time, the eagerness for opportunity, improvement and growth. We want both to preserve and continue the proven values of the past and to provide better education, larger opportunities and improvements for the next generation."

As we stand on the threshold of tomorrow, we look to the future with yet another change in the face of Wilmington on the immediate horizon and hope that our actions will become the basis for an even better way of life for our future citizens.

Neighborhood Store to Shopping Mall

1930



James W. Murray's Neighborhood Store at "Perry's Corner"



1955



Emma Murray

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East Gate Mall in 1980



East Gate Mall

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Committee on
Human Services & Elderly Affairs
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To Joan L. Maga, Chairman of the 250th Anniversary Committee:

Wilmington's 250th anniversary has a special meaning for me, just as it has for many of you. Having been involved in Wilmington's governmental process since 1963, first as a member of the Planning Board, four terms on the Board of Selectmen, and now in my second term as State Representative in the General Court, I've been a witness to many significant changes in this warm and vibrant community. Our town's growth during these years produced a strange paradox which was a by-product of good planning and foresight. Although our industrial base grew significantly with many companies locating here because of our accessibility to all major routes, namely 93, 128 and 495, and a stable political climate, our residential growth did not increase dramatically, as in many neighboring communities.

The townspeople have shown amazing foresight in setting aside green areas for future generations to enjoy, the most recent being approximately 120 acres set aside as a town forest a few years ago. My wife Jean and myself have found this community to be an excellent place in which to raise our three children, Hope, James, Jr., and Tina. With a strong neighborhood elementary school system, a high school and regional vocational school with good reputations and an excellent recreation department, Wilmington has much to offer.

As I look back I consider myself very lucky to have served with many of Wilmington's late citizens, such as Harold Melzar, Phillip Buzzell, Wavie Drew and Charlie Black, because they played such an important part in shaping the future of this community.

As a legislator, I've enjoyed representing the citizens of our community and working hard to help solve the problems which the towns face today.

In conclusion, may I say "Happy 250th Birthday, Wilmington!" May you wear as well the next 250 years.

Representative James R. Miceli

A Few Old Timers



Senator
Chester W. Clark



Attorney Philip B. Buzzell



The Clark Home corner Clark Street



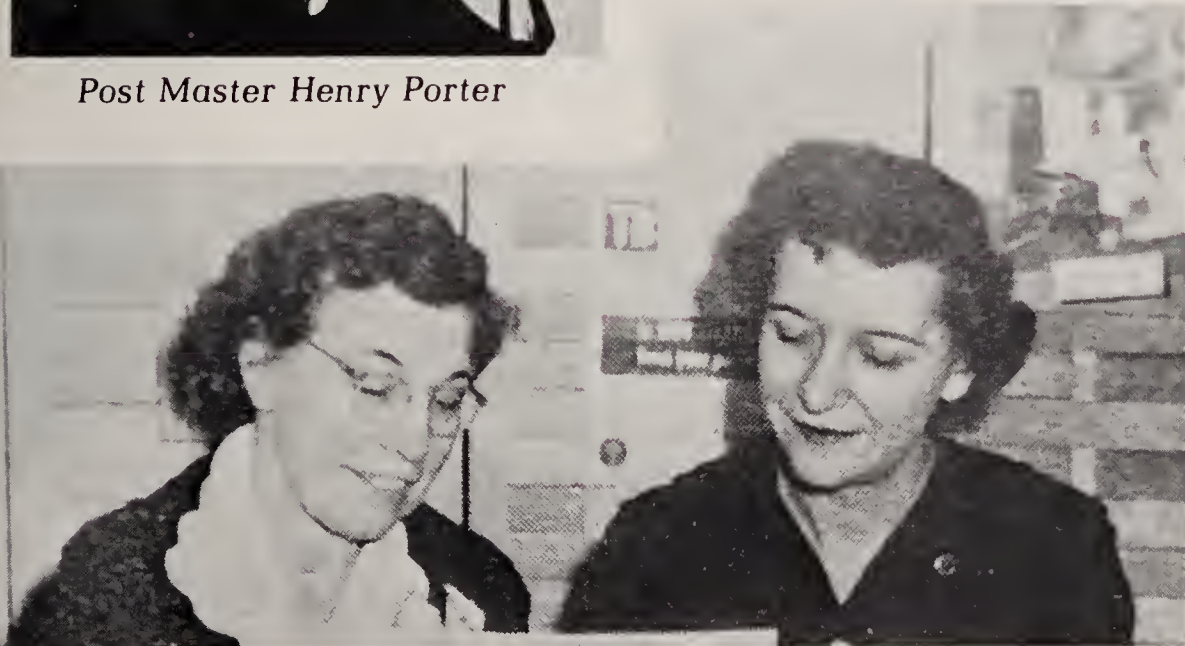
Post Master Henry Porter



Banker Joseph McMahon



Restaurant owner
George Spanos —
Honorary Mayor of
Wilmington



Public Health Nurses Esther Nichols and Ann Butters



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Middlesex Avenue
 The funeral of Mrs.
 Dr. France B. Hiller —
 old St. Thomas Church
 occupied present site of
 Memorial Library.
 At left is the watering
 trough which stood at
 the head of the Common.



Hiller House on
 Main Street —
 May 23, 1900



Hiller Laboratory and flooded Cranberry Meadow now the Masonic Hall and Rotary Park pond.

Photograph Courtesy of Capt. Larz Neilson



Photograph taken in 1903 soon after Milton Holt became Post Master.

Originally erected by Mrs. Dr. France B. Hiller as a real estate office for her second husband. This building was used for many years as a Post Office for the Town of Wilmington.

In 1957 the building became the new office for the Bedell Brothers Insurance business.

Renovation took place in 1965.



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Dr. Daniel T. Buzzell House about 1905

The William S. Cavanaugh & Son Funeral Home now occupies the house built for the family of the late Dr. Daniel T. Buzzell during the 1890's. Dr. Buzzell practiced medicine here much of his life in a home office. He was for many years Wilmington's school physician.

Originally it was Dr. Buzzell who convinced his young friend William S. Cavanaugh of the need for a funeral home for the growing Catholic population of the town. Bill Cavanaugh later purchased the Buzzell home and set up his funeral business there.

When Cavanaugh died in 1957 his son purchased the business and funeral home from his father's estate. Helping William F. Cavanaugh was his wife Millie, who assumed operation of the home after his untimely death.

Today the William S. Cavanaugh & Son Funeral Home is managed by Millie and young William F. Cavanaugh Jr. for people of all religious faiths.

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Rudolph Porter



Dr. Daniel T. Buzzell



Dr. Buzzell's home and office



Charles and Abbie Sargent
with Edmund

POLICE DEPARTMENT - A HISTORY

By Adele C. Passmore

In early days it was the Constable who saw to it that the Town's laws were obeyed. At Wilmington's first Town Meeting, held March 2, 1731 two men were sworn to the office of Constable. Giles Robarts, whose home stood on the site of the present Boutwell Street School, was "chosen Constable for the year in sewing and at the same time the Towne accepted Benjamin Lewis to serve in the Towne as Constable in the Roome of Giles Robarts". This reference to a Constable's "Roome" is interesting implying that the Constable from earliest times was granted a place for the transaction of his most important town business.

The ancient office of Constable was transplanted to this country directly from seventeenth century England, where the main duty of Constable was the "apprehension of fellions". In New England the Constable was faced with a much taller order. "Much business is like to ensue to the Constable" begins an early statute listing his duties. It was his job to do anything that the Selectmen wished to have done and he was empowered to call on any inhabitant for help. He was expected to "make distresses, and gather fynes", to "whipp and punish," and to apprehend "such as be overtaken with drink or swearing or Sabbathday breaking". He also was to "take notice of common coasters (adventurers) unprofitable fowlers (vandals), and other idle persons and tobacco takers." In addition he executed warrants for Town Meeting.

The position of Town Constable was not an enviable one. Along with all of his other duties he was expected to collect taxes from the townspeople. Should he fail to complete his collection, he could be held personally responsible for the sum of money outstanding. Many a Constable-elect, in fear of financial ruin, bargained with the Town for his release or gladly paid the fine required by his refusal to accept the office. Inflation was becoming a serious problem in 1741. The first man voted to the office of Constable in that year was Samuel Killam who lived on the site of Harnden Tavern. He refused to serve and paid his fine. Next voted was Thomas Rich, who had given land to the Town for its "burying ground" a few years earlier. Then William Tucker of Ballardvale Road was elected. Both men refused and paid their fines. Finally, Lieut. Ebenezer Pierce, who lived on Main Street near Butters Row, was chosen and it is recorded that he was "sworn to the office."

A review of the duties of constable may seem to imply that he was a one-man police force. There were, however, other offices filled at Town Meeting



in the early days which in effect contributed to the keeping of order in the community. The Tythingmen enforced the observance of the Sabbath. The Fenceviewers administered the Fence Laws and settled disputes arising over the trespassing of livestock and the Field Drivers were authorized to round up and impound domestic animals found roaming at large.

For the first 100 years after Wilmington was incorporated the men of the Town took their turn at being Constable. By 1830 the job had acquired a salary. \$3.50 was paid to John Gowing. In 1845 Micaiah Gowing is on record as having "bid" for the job. He offered to serve for \$10.00 and was declared elected. Levi Swain Jr. was Constable from 1867 to 1869 at \$20.00 per year.

In 1872 both Samuel B. Nichols and A. Porter Pearson were chosen constable. In addition, Pearson was designated Wilmington's first "police officer."

The following year signs of a Police Department really became evident. In 1873 S. B. Nichols was Constable again and five "Special Police Officers" were chosen: A. Porter Pearson, Stephen O. Butters, E. T. White, Noah Clapp, and Charles W. Swain.

Listed under "Miscellaneous Expenses" for the Town in 1878 the Police Account covered the purchase of two pair of handcuffs, each costing \$3.00 and several badges at \$1.50. Beside the Constable, Thomas A. Bancroft, there were three Special Police. These were paid on the average \$2.00 for duty in that year.

Edward M. Nichols, a son of Samuel, was chosen Constable in 1883 and given \$25.00 for his service. In 1884 the Town appropriated money for a "lock-up". Built on the site of the First Meetinghouse where the Tree Department's "Moth House" now stands it was valued at \$300.00. Later this first "police station" was moved across the street to become the wing on the left side of the Town Hall. Here it continued to function for many years as Police Headquarters.

In 1893 there was for the first time a complete Police Force in the Town of Wilmington. In addition to Samuel R. Rice, a carpenter, who served as Constable, there was Charles B. Haley, the Town's first Chief of Police, and a force of seven Police Officers. Ed Nichols served as "Keeper of the Lock-up."

Samuel R. Rice was selected as both Constable and Chief of Police in 1894. He resigned in May, 1899 and William E. Swain was appointed to fill the vacancy. The total appropriation for the Police Department at that time was only \$100.00 per year.

With the exception of the year 1901 when Milton V. Holt became Chief, Swain served the Town until March, 1912. In November, 1904 the Town voted to install a telephone in his home. Chief Swain wore "four hats" that year: Chief of Police, Constable, Keeper of the Lock-up, and Fish and Game Warden. Assisting him were four Special Officers: Harry A. Tolman, William H. Baxter, Joshua W. Purington and Ellis E. Swain.

Walter H. Hill was appointed Chief in March, 1912 and served until 1931. For a number of years, his office was kept in his home at the corner of Main Street and Middlesex Avenue. During Chief Hill's term of office many disagreeable, hazardous tasks confronted the small Wilmington police force. During this period the Town was growing rapidly and was often the resort of an undesirable element which felt here they could do anything they pleased. Under Chief Hill the department gradually brought about a great improvement.

The Town's By-Laws, drawn up in 1918, presented several sections of "Police Regulations" pertaining to use of the Town's streets and sidewalks. Fines from one to twenty dollars could be levied on persons caught throwing stones, obstructing free passage with games, sledding where streets had been posted to forbid it, or by driving or wheeling any vehicle, excepting a child's carriage drawn by hand, or allowing any horse, cattle, swine or sheep to go upon any sidewalk in the Town.

The By-Laws, revised in 1929, included provision for the granting of licenses for a variety of reasons including sale of junk and rental of boats and bathingsuits. "Use of Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places and Behavior Thereon" including Wells, Curfew, Street Litter, Street Musicians, Shows and Addresses as well as Advertisements and Notices were all listed with proper restrictions to insure good order in the Town of Wilmington.



Shown standing before the Police Station on Main Street in 1934 are Chief Harry Ainsworth, Burton Frotton, Herman Harris, and Paul and Talbot Sidelinker.



The Police Force in 1940 consisted of the Chief and four regular men. Left to right: Chief Harry J. Ainsworth, Edmund Waters, Deputy Chief Francis S. Hoban and Selectman Jerome J. O'Leary. Standing in the rear are L. Talbot Sidelinker and Frank Gammons.

In 1930 Town Meeting appropriated \$600.00 to install an automatic traffic signal at the corner of Main Street, Church Street and Burlington Avenue. In addition money was appropriated to provide for all night street lighting service from the corner of Lowell and Main Streets up to Clark Street.

Police work was also made more efficient with a police car and a new headquarters, located on Main Street between Huntley's Restaurant and Ames News. Civil Service regulations were also adopted.

Following Chief Hill in 1932 was Harry Ainsworth who served the Town until 1947. In his first report Chief Ainsworth states: During the past year "considerable change has taken place in the appearance of the Police Station, located in the center." Previous to alterations, the place was dingy and cold, and it was necessary for all persons, required by law to be kept in the lock-up, to be transported to the Highway Building on Adelaide Street where an extra police officer was required.

The station was entirely renovated and two portable cells installed to the rear of the quarters with modern bathroom facilities.

Under Ainsworth's leadership the Town purchased its first ambulance in 1934. A fund was started, handled by the Mechanics Savings Bank, to take care of the purchase and maintenance which received generous support. A second-hand Lincoln sedan was purchased. The door on the right side was cut so that an invalid basket could be placed inside and a patient transported to the hospital in relative comfort.

The ambulance proved useful in 1936 when sent to Lowell for three days at the time of the Lowell Flood. It was also of special use during the Hurricane of 1938.

One of the most publicized murder cases in Massachusetts began with the discovery of a body on Kelly Hill in 1934. Chief Harry Ainsworth in helping to solve the mystery attracted nationwide attention. Two years later the missing man was apprehended in Wisconsin, returned for trial, and sentenced to State Prison.

Wilmington had the distinction of being the second town in New England to have a First Aid Station established through its local Red Cross Chapter. Men of the Police Department trained for three weeks during the summer. At this time the station was still located on Main Street.

The Police Report for 1935 stated "Among our outstanding cases of the year were the hold-up of the local bank (the Mechanics Savings Bank now known as the Reading Savings Bank) and the apprehension of a band of counterfeiters which started operations in this locality."

A new car was purchased and a radio installed which made possible contact with any car within five minutes through a system of relays to and broadcast by the State Police in Framingham. The following year a radio was installed in the Wilmington Police Station, thus eliminating calls to North Reading.

New military Smith and Wesson 38 calibre revolvers were purchased for each man in the department in 1936 and training was conducted by Col. Duncan Stewart of Stoneham. The basement of Town Hall was used as a target range for gun practice.

The March warrant held an article for a new building to house the Fire and Police Department. A committee was appointed to assess need and cost.

In 1938 the Police Station which had been located, temporarily in the east end of the Highway Department garage on Adelaide Street, next to Walker School, was moved to the corner of Church Street below Griffen's Hardware Store. In the front room were desks, a filing cabinet for records and a first aid box which became especially important one day when twenty-one people required treatment at one time following a three-car accident. There were two jail cells with modern toilet facilities located in the rear room of the station.

In 1939 motorized patrol work was initiated, the entire Town being covered several times a day. Enforcement of Motor Vehicle laws on speeding caused the number of auto accidents to decrease. A School Safety Patrol System was initiated and worked out well with the safety Patrol Boys deserving much credit.

The Red Cross First Aid Station in the Police Station continued to prove useful, especially in summer when there were a great many cases of cut feet due to broken glass in Silver Lake.

The Mechanics Savings Bank on Main Street was held up again in November, 1939. Deputy Francis Hoban, after a spectacular chase, captured the bandit when his car overturned on the North Reading road about three miles out of the centre.

The force in 1940 consisted of the Chief and four Regular men plus twenty Special Officers subject to call.

Automobile accidents showed an increase over previous years and automobile traffic was increasing tremendously. Chief Ainsworth recommended that signs for a speed limit of 30 miles per hour be placed about the Town. New traffic lights were installed at Main and Church Streets as well as at Grove Avenue.

Arrests increased the following year as seventeen cases were apprehended for the Police Departments of other cities and towns. A man wanted for armed robbery in Boston was picked up here and the largest cache of stolen goods ever to be located in this town, \$37,900 worth, was recovered. The merchandise had been stolen from the American Optical Company.

A question on the ballot in 1941 placed the office of Chief of Police within the Classified Civil Service. A second question provided for the continuance in office of Harry J. Ainsworth, the present incumbent, after passing a qualifying examination.

The old ambulance was taken out of service in May and a new Cadillac ambulance with every device needed was purchased.



Regular and Special Officers



The Auxiliary (volunteer) Police Force stands with Chief Harry Ainsworth before the old Police Station on Church Street in 1942.

Edmund Waters, a Regular Patrolman in Wilmington was selected in 1942 for appointment to the United States Secret Service and served as a Body Guard for Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower.

In 1947 Harry Ainsworth resigned as Chief to become Probation Officer of Woburn District Court.

The Department was under the leadership of Deputy Chief Francis Hoban until October 20, 1948 when Paul J. Lynch was appointed Chief of Police.

Chief Lynch, who was to head the Wilmington Police Department for the next thirty years, started as a Special Police in 1938. He was appointed a Regular in 1942 just before entering the Army and, returning to the Department in February 1946, and subsequently became Chief.

A plan was approved by the Town for a new combined Fire and Police Station and an ample modern brick building was erected beside the old wooden fire station on Church Street in 1953.

The Police utilized the south end of the facility sharing the building with the Fire Department until 1960 when the present attractive and efficient Police Station was completed on Adelaide Street.

When Chief Lynch retired in 1979 he was one of the most seasoned law enforcement officials in the New England region. The Police Department in 1948 consisted of only seven men, including the Chief, deputy chief, a sergeant and four patrolmen. Thirty years later there is a chief, a lieutenant, seven sergeants, 24 patrolmen, two women police and several part-time traffic supervisors.

A minimum force of one sergeant and four patrolmen are on duty on each of three shifts. Offering additional expertise are two detectives, a juvenile officer, two trained dog handlers known as K-9 officers, a full-time narcotics and safety officer and a lieutenant who is primarily occupied with court work.



Lt. A. John Imbimbo
Juvenile officer and Prosecutor for over thirty years



Chief Paul J. Lynch — 1948 - 1979

Wilmington's entire nineteen square miles is patrolled with one-man cars operating from one modern building, Colonial in design, located on Adelaide Street. Its facilities include a squad room, pistol range and administration offices, as well as laboratories for fingerprinting and photography. It houses equipment for riot and narcotics control as well as other criminal investigations. There are five cells in addition to detention facilities for female prisoners and juveniles

Chief Lynch, an advocate of higher education for police officers, has been quoted as saying "It is a new era for police officers where police work is a science, and the laws are sophisticated and always changing. In the old days an officer bought his own uniform, was given a badge and a gun and was sent into the street. That won't do today."

Successful candidates selected by the Police Chief and the Town Manager are given twelve weeks training at the Massachusetts State Police Academy. Other in-service training programs are provided. Many members of the Wilmington Police Department are enrolled in degree courses in criminal justice provided by local colleges and universities. Others are sent to the F.B.I. Academy.

Still a comparatively small community Wilmington is not regarded as having a serious crime problem. The Town's newest police chief, Bobby N. Stewart, was sworn in on May 17, 1979.

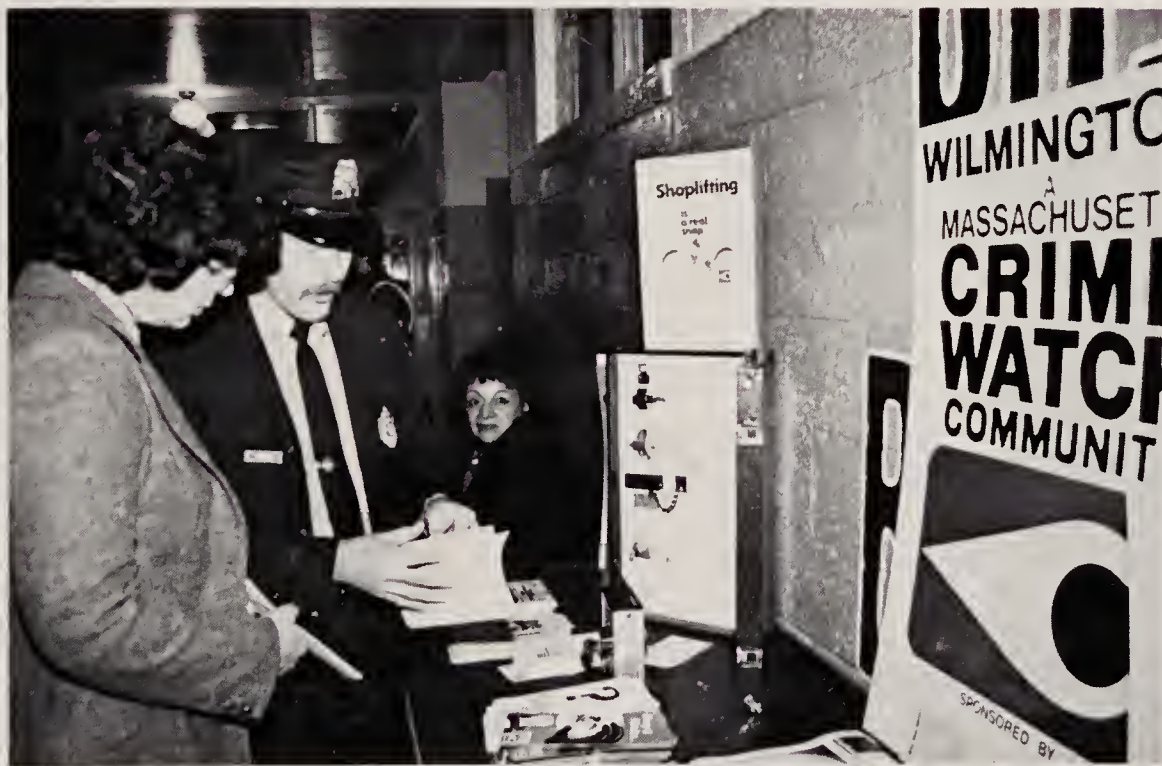
250 years after the incorporation of the Town of Wilmington and in spite of its efficient modern Police Department the ancient office of Constable is still a reality. One or two constables are appointed annually by the Selectmen. However, the duties now entail only the posting of Notices and Warrants for Town Meetings and Elections, as well as the posting and serving of notices for other departments and offices of the Town.



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Rescue Operation



Bobby N. Stewart —
Chief of Police



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HISTORY OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Adele C. Passmore

From that time when the earliest settlers were required to provide a ladder "to stand up against the chimney", fire has been a constant hazard. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, once fire commenced, there was little hope for house or barn, especially in a small town like Wilmington. Here there was no fire department nor any fire-fighting equipment other than that system of hand-filled and thrown pails full of water known as the "bucket brigade". A burning building would have to wait until help could come from a larger neighboring town such as Woburn, and the long delay usually meant little if anything would be saved.

The most spectacular fire on record during this early period occurred on February 15, 1864 when a spark from Thomas Bond's cracker bakery, which stood burning near the corner of Wildwood Street and Middlesex Avenue, floated across the road and caught on the steeple of the Congregational Church. Although the 1865 Town Report notes an "expense" of \$18.00 "for refreshments, pails, and lines, furnished at the fire" by S. B. Nichols whose store stood close by, there was little that the Townspeople could do but stand and watch as the steeple and later the entire church slowly burned before them. In spite of this disaster, no formal attempt was made to provide a Fire Department or fire-fighting equipment for another twenty years.

The prototype of the present fire department was the Town firewarden authorized by the General Court as early as 1744, but apparently not implemented here in Wilmington until after the Civil War. The intrusion of the railroads during the last half of the nineteenth century, and subsequent hazards of brush and forest fires caused by wood and coal burning engines, finally gave rise to a system of Fire and Forest Wardens who were chosen regularly and paid according to the number of hours they were needed. Isaac Damon received \$6.00 for "watching the fire in Sawpit Woods" in August, 1870. "Watching" the progress of a fire was about all anyone could do in that day.

In 1883 the Town paid out \$145. to unnamed persons "for watching and extinguishing the fire in the north part of the town." The following year \$45. was expanded for "force pumps" for the Fire Wardens.

Five Wardens were appointed in 1887 and it was voted that they act in the capacity of Forest Fire Wardens. Ladders, hooks and badges were provided for Asa Potter, Charles Buck, Charles F. Harris, William H. Carter, II, and Edward M. Nichols.



During the 1880's and 90's a number of public wells were dug around town at the intersection of principal roads. These wells were the nineteenth century equivalent of our modern day fire hydrants and supplied water to the fire fighters along with local ponds, streams and household wells.

The Town owned \$140. worth of fire apparatus in 1892 after it approved the purchase of ten Johnson pumps at four dollars each. The list of Fire and Forest Wardens in that year included ten men. Two of these were Samuel Rice and Howard Horton who each received \$2.50 in wages. The Town appropriated \$150. in 1893 for its combined police and fire protection.

\$125 was raised in 1894 to compensate Silas Buck for his horse which was killed while drawing the "steamer" from Andover to the Haley fire on Andover Street.

Milton T. Holt became the first "Chief" of the Fire and Forest Wardens in 1898. The following year the term "deputies" was first applied to the other wardens.

Forty-one men, an unusual number, are listed in connection with pay receipts for fighting fire in 1899, the year Nod Mill burned down. Amounts ranged from a low of forty cents to a high of \$9.00 which was paid to Fire Warden Oliver McGrane.

In the spring of 1903 a fire, which was to be of major consequence to the Town, began in what is now known as Wilmington Square. The area was devastated after fire started, presumably from a spark from the boiler, in the plant belonging to Schmiel R. McIntosh.



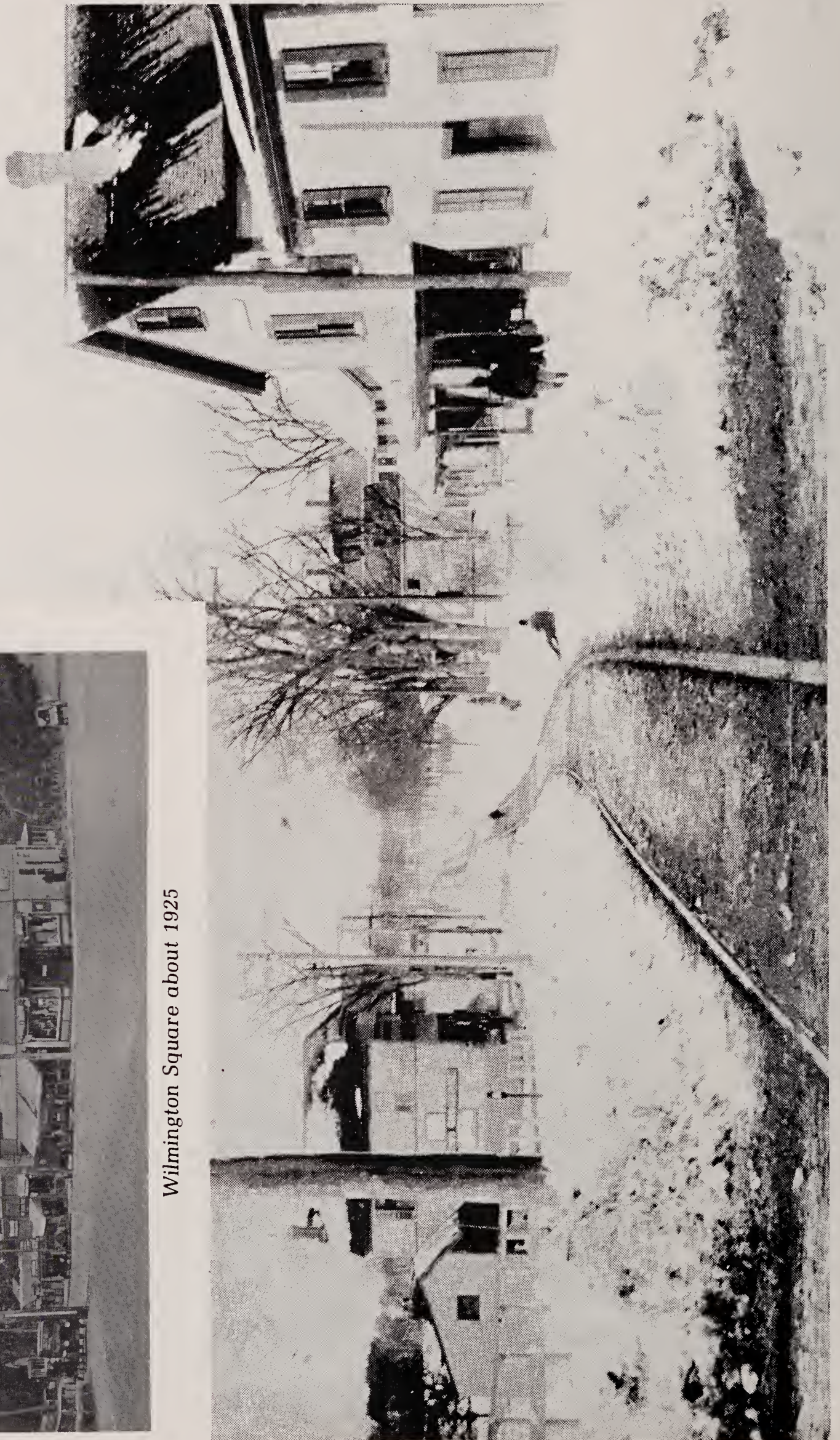
The corner of Church Street showing the establishment of Schmiel R. McIntosh which was consumed by fire in 1903.

Photographs courtesy of Capt. Larz Neilson

The "Square" Before and After the Fire



Wilmington Square about 1925



Looking north along Main Street from the Church Street-Burlington Avenue Crossing. Buck Bros. Store is on the left. Hudson's Store and Ames Hall stand to the right. Fire destroyed Ames Corner in 1903.

Photograph courtesy of Capt. Larz Neilson

Mr. McIntosh conducted a blacksmith and paint shop as well as a wood-working establishment, all in a group of wooden buildings near the corner of Church Street. From the main building the fire spread to the paint shop where a chemical explosion occurred as villagers tried to remove stock and tools. No one was hurt but the fire crossed Church Street following a shower of sparks and destroyed Ames Hall as well as adjacent stores. Among these was the general store belonging to Charles E. Hudson.

Although the Town had neither fire apparatus nor a public water supply, sufficient water was found in a flooded cranberry bog on the nearby Hiller Estate, now the site of Rotary Park. Four buildings were burned and several damaged including the railroad station which lost its roof. Total damages were estimated at \$20,000. Only the rapid response and effectual work of the Woburn firemen, who helped, prevented heavier losses.

The citizens of Wilmington immediately held what might be termed "an indignation meeting" to protest the lack of fire-fighting equipment in the community and three months later, on July 13, 1903 a Special Town Meeting was called to order. A vote of forty "yeas" out of forty-one votes authorized the purchase of "two Howe Combination Engines, sixteen hundred feet of two inch rubber-lined hose, two combination hose and ladder wagons, hand chemicals and necessary appliances." It was further

voted to "erect buildings to house the same". Appropriated was the sum of \$2,500.

A fire-house was built on Church Street at the site of the present post office. Here Engine No. One and a Hose and Ladder wagon were situated. Later a barn and corral were provided for horses on the site. Another fire-house for Engine Company No. Two was erected on the grounds of the Harriman Tannery, south of the Boston and Maine railroad crossing in North Wilmington.

The Wilmington Fire Department was organized in 1904 with Caleb S. Harriman as Chief and Frank W. Kidder as Assist. Chief of both engine companies. Engine Co. No. One consisted of 23 "call men" under the direction of Captain Carl A. Cady. First and second Lieutenants were D. W. Boynton and C. E. Carter. Frank W. Dayton was clerk. Engine Co. No. Two had 27 "call men" under Captain Joseph M. Hill, Lieut. A. C. Thompson and clerk L. H. Smith.

Getting to a fire on time to be of any use was a serious problem. Once a telephone line had been installed fire alarms were called in to Hudson's General Store. Members of the volunteer fire fighting team would then locate a horse to hitch up to each piece of equipment. Sometimes the store delivery wagon could be obtained. At other times another conveyance would have to be flagged down and the horses "borrowed" before setting out to fight the fire.



Engine Company No. One



Engine Company No. Two

In 1904 in his first report to the Town, Chief Harriman urged that steps be taken to provide permanent horses for the Fire Department in order to avoid unnecessary delay. The Town Warrant the following year requested purchase of an additional pair of horses - for the use of both the Fire and the Highway Departments. Over two dozen fire alarm boxes were installed.

Fire "tubs" were filled at local watering places, scattered about the Town. One, equipped with a pump and trough, was located at the head of the Town Common. Others were located at the corner of Ballardvale Street by the old North Schoolhouse and at the junction of Federal and Woburn Streets by the East Schoolhouse. Another was dug on Woburn Street near Babcock's barn. It belonged to the Town but was equipped with a pump and horse trough which were kept in repair by the neighbors.

Frank W. Kidder replaced Harriman as Chief in 1905. There were 48 fire alarms in that year, nearly one a week.

In contrast Chief Joseph M. Hill stated in 1906 "We have been very fortunate the past year in having few fires. We have had only fourteen alarms; only two of which have been house fires."

An express wagon was purchased with 40 ten quart cans, 12 Johnson pumps, 12 shovels and 6 brooms for use at brush fires. A second wagon was loaned to the department. One wagon with half of the equipment was kept at the residence of the Chief in the north part of Town while the other with the balance of gear was at the residence of the Assist. Chief at the Centre.

In 1907 the suggestion was made that the Town arrange to pay a modest salary to a limited number of fire company members "in order to absolutely insure the presence of these men at all fires and offer needed inducement for a personal interest and effectiveness".

In 1908 the Board of Fire Engineers and the Forest Fire Wardens merged under one head, that of the Wilmington Fire Department.

The report of 1909 was the first after re-organization. Chief Joseph M. Hill was also Forest Fire Warden with Albert Butters as Assistant Chief.

Butters was Chief in 1918 when he wrote a word to the voters. "At present the Town has one horse and four pieces of fire apparatus; . . . would it not be better for the Town if it had one piece of fire apparatus and no horse?" Chief Butters recommended that the Town get in line with surrounding towns. He asked for a good "triple combination" motor truck, one with a pump, hose, ladders, chemical tank, etc.



FIRST FIRE HOUSE on Church Street showing Engine No. One and the Hose and Ladder Wagon.

Edwin L. Day became Fire Chief in 1919. At a Special Town Meeting 140 men turned out to vote for a new Ford and a pump. Senator Clark took the floor and moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$4,000. The motion passed in the affirmative, although it was a lot of money in those days. Thus the Town purchased its first motor-propelled piece of apparatus, a model "T" Ford.

When the new "Combination" arrived in August the apparatus formerly housed at Engine House No. One was transferred to Silver Lake. Christian Neilson supplied a building to house it and a volunteer company of fifteen men was formed to protect Silver Lake where there were numerous sawdust fires at the site of the old ice-houses. The men also responded to alarms elsewhere in Town, if necessary, receiving 45 cents per hour while on duty.

The Fire House on Church Street where the new Combination was situated was greatly improved. The old wooden floor was removed and replaced by a cement floor which served to strengthen the foundation. A two-story addition was built at the rear. The second floor was finished off as a bedroom for those on night-duty.

Assisting Chief Day was Ernest W. Eames. Captain of Combination No. One was Chester L. Horton. The Combination truck greatly improved the efficiency of the Fire Department.

In 1920 Chief Day reported that the Reo Truck, also, was a good purchase. He found he could now cover the Town to any point from the engine house in about eight minutes; even as far away as Foster's Pond which had taken a horse about one hour.

In 1927 the Wilmington Fire Department learned a lesson it has not forgotten. Never strike a red-hot chimney with a stream of water from a fire hose! On September 11th of that year two men were killed off Lake Street. The chimney was struck and collapsed on hose-men, Howard "Russell" Pratt and Wilber A. Sheldon, a grandson of Asa G. Sheldon.

At last in 1928 the Town began to lay its first water mains and fire hydrants followed the course of Town water.

The frequency of fire reported increased each year until in 1930 the number had exceeded that for any previous year; 91 house fires and 163 brush fires.



The REO TRUCK — "a good purchase"

Seated on the running board is Leon Call. Sharing the seat are Selectman Frank Dayton with Carroll Horton behind the wheel. Standing far left is Dan Boynton. On the truck from left are Chester Horton, Chief Ed Day, Frank Meuse, Russell Pratt and Ed Woodside.

Photographs courtesy of Capt. Larz Neilson

Water Department superintendent, Donald W. Foster, was the instigator behind the reformation of the North Wilmington Fire Department in July, 1937. Foster became Captain in charge of seven men with Edmund H. Sargent as clerk. A 1937 Chevrolet truck was purchased for \$700. and the men of the Water Department volunteered the labor to convert the chassis into a 500 gallon pumper. A bell and money for a water tank were donated and a pump furnished. Those men who worked on the project at odd times were; Don Foster, Ed Sargent, Elmer Eaton, Arthur Williams, Harry Cutter, Lester Swain and blacksmith Harry Solow. Housed at the No. Wilmington Water Works at Brown's Crossing, the truck responded to sixty alarms in 1938; 21 of which were house or chimney fires.

Assistant Fire Chief Winfred W. Rice in reporting on the Hurricane of September 25, 1938, wrote: "I feel that the Town and residents are grateful to the U.S. Forest Service 1181st Co. C.C.C. No. Reading, Mass. for the fine work they have done clearing and burning the slash; the worst fire hazard this Town has ever witnessed." 172 acres were cleared at a cost of 6563 man-days labor with 45 acres remaining to be burned during the winter. The Fire Department was obligated to provide protection by making one man available with a truck and hose during times of burning.



Art Williams and Ed Sargent

In 1940 the regular fire apparatus was comprised of three engines, housed in the remodeled and outdated station house on Church Street. The last word in modern firefighting equipment for that day had just been purchased for \$7,500. The oldest engine, a "Combination", was acquired when Town Water connections were completed about 1928. A third engine, bought in 1930, was used for fighting brush fires.



FIREFIGHTERS — 1940 Standing beside the three pieces of fire apparatus housed at the Church Street Station are — Selectman Jerome J. O'Leary, Fire Chief Edwin L. Day and Assistant Fire Chief Winfred W. Rice.



Triple Combination — 1940

Fire Alarms were operated from the Station House on Church Street while simultaneously a whistle alarm sounded from Town Hall. Meanwhile, an old World War I submarine horn installed in the cupulo at Brown's Crossing could be heard for three miles and spread its message to all Call Firemen located in the north part of Town. When the horn malfunctioned about 1970 it was not replaced.

Edmund H. Sargent took over as superintendent of the Water Department following Don Foster about 1940 and became Captain of the No. Wilmington team of fire-fighters at that time.

On October 23, 1947 thousands of volunteers battled one of the worst woods fires that the Town had seen for many years. Starting at Andover Street, near the Pumping Station, it spread to North Reading where patients at the Sanitarium had to be evacuated. Equipment came from as far away as Nashua N. H., Boston, and Danvers, along with representation from all surrounding towns to fight flames which threatened many homes.

One home on Ballardvale Street was lost while the flames spread at great speed through the pine trees. Flames and smoke could be seen for miles as the fire reached south along West Street to Reading and Woburn. Fires were also reported along Salem and on Wildwood Streets.

Chief Winfred W. Rice retired in 1949 and was replaced by Joseph Barton. Arthur J. Boudreau became Fire Chief in 1950, a position he was to hold for the next thirty years.



Old Church Street Fire Station

A design for a new fire station was proposed in 1951 to replace Central Fire Station which had been condemned for many years. A subsequent plan was approved and a new combined Fire and Police Station erected in 1953.

The New England Fire Insurance Rating Assoc. surveyed the Town in the summer of 1955. Recommended was that consideration be given to replacing the 18 year old Chevrolet, Engine No. 5; that the full paid force be increased by appointment of seven additional men and that the Town purchase an aerial ladder truck. Recommended also, was that consideration be given to erecting a fire station in North Wilmington and that at least fifty fire alarm boxes of modern "succession" design be provided as an initial installation.

The Fire Department then consisted of the Chief, two Lieutenants, ten Privates, fifteen Call Men and seven Deputy Forest Wardens, including Ernest W. Eames, Herbert C. Barrows, Edmund H. Sargent and Arthur S. Williams.

The 1958 budget requested \$3,800 to install an automatic Fire Alarm Control Cabinet with three circuits at Headquarters. The first system had all boxes on one circuit. Should a pole be knocked down, or the line broken by a storm, all the boxes would be out of service. The new service divided the Town into four sections, each with a separate circuit. Also purchased was a 75 foot aerial ladder truck.

In 1958 the Fire Department operated on three shifts for a total of 56 hours per man week. In the same year a formal training program on "Firemanship" was offered for both permanent and call members of the department by the Mass. Dept. of Education.

Construction of a new sub-station in North Wilmington was considered. However, as it appeared that there would be no reduction in insurance rates to benefit property owners the facilities at Brown's Crossing continued to serve.

On June 7, 1960 the Fire Department came into its own when the Police Department vacated the Station on Church Street leaving the brick building entirely for Fire Department use.

Before the new St. Thomas Church was completed the Town's worst fire in years swept through Villanova Hall where Catholic services were then held. Despite every effort by the local fire department the building was gutted by the flames.

The work-week for firefighters decreased in number of hours from 48 in 1965 to 42 by 1968.

In 1970 the force included the Chief, Four Lieutenants and 24 Privates. There were 13 members on the call force. Calls had increased to 1,106. There were twenty-seven "bomb scares" called in during that year. Two school buildings were actually damaged by "moletov cocktails".

A Deputy Chief was added to the force in 1975.



Chief Arthur J. Boudreau

In February 1980 Chief Arthur J. Boudreau retired after 32 years of service to the community. Taking his place as Acting Chief of the Department is Daniel C. Wandell.

The manual force consists of Chief, Deputy Chief, four Lieutenants and twenty-eight Privates. There is a call force of eleven members. The Department responded to a total of 1817 Calls during the year. Of these 726 were for rescue purposes and for ambulance. There were 550 brush, grass, and rubbish fires reported.

The listing of Fire Department apparatus in 1980 includes the 1958 75 foot aerial ladder truck, two pumpers purchased in 1965 and 1969, a brush truck, new this year, the Civil Defense Rescue Truck and a four year old modular ambulance.

Inspection was made of all schools, public buildings and flammable storage areas in the Town, as is required by law, and Fire Prevention lectures were given to the school children.

Business establishments were inspected and local industries assisted in the organization and training of fire brigades while a new circuit was added to the Fire Alarm Board.

All homeowners were urged to install early-warning fire detectors in their homes for the protection of themselves and their families.

The dedicated service, loyalty and efficiency of the members of the Wilmington Fire Department are a cause for great community pride.



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MASSACHUSETTS

To the Citizens of Wilmington:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to greet you on the occasion of Wilmington's 250th birthday. This is a proud and exciting event in the history of the area once known as "Land of Goshen" and "Land of Nod."

From its earliest years as a small farming village to its current status as a suburban community with 18,000 citizens, Wilmington has enjoyed a rich and varied heritage. As it continues to develop economically in future years, I know that it will retain that heritage, and its special character.

Very truly yours,

JAMES M. SHANNON
Member of Congress

JMS:sck

The Corner of Glen Road and Middlesex Avenue

Then



This Federalist house dating back to 1800 was once the home of Squire William Blanchard Jr., State Inspector of Hops during the period after the War of 1812 when Wilmington was famous for its hops production. This late nineteenth century photograph shows the Blanchard House as it appeared with earlier parts of the house and barn still attached and visible. The Town Hay Scales in the foreground was used for weighing hops as well as hay.

Now



Beautifully preserved the Blanchard House is now the property of the David A. Gagnon family. The monument on the site of the old scales is the Harold R. Rogers Memorial. Rogers (insert) was a local boy, a First Sergeant in the U.S. Army, who died in the service on October 13, 1918 during World War I.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

By Adele C. Passmore

and

Arlene A. Suprenant

In times past there was much interdependence upon surrounding households, and neighborly assistance among the new settlers provided many opportunities for fellowship along with the exchange of hard work. From the clearing of the ground with the help of "chopping bees" and "log rollings" to the final "raising" of the house, barn, or school there were many occasions for "a friendly bee" and a treat of rum to accompany a day's work.

A common custom among both men and women on a smaller scale was a little neighborly visiting called "change work". Work always went easier and more could often be accomplished when two worked together, whether the project was making soap or cider or building a stone wall.

The hard work of cooperation for survival and the pleasure of fellowship and sharing continued until well into the nineteenth century. Everyone has heard of corn husking, quilting parties, and barn dances which provided our forefathers with much joyful entertainment.

For over 100 years after the incorporation of the Town of Wilmington there is no record of the formation of any formal social organization. However, on April 14, 1834, as a result of the legal separation of the Town and Church, resulting financial problems led to the creation of a Parish Society made up of only a part of the Town's inhabitants. The support of "The Church of Christ" and the salary of the minister were provided by this society for years through voluntary subscription and a supplemental tax on members.

Slowly, with increasing population and the arrival of new families with diverse religious views, the social ethics and relationships became altered and changes in values and attitudes began to erode the social outlook of the Town. The trend has continued and aid to families in time of need is now given less often by kindly neighbors as it was in times past. Instead, it is provided through well organized systems, paid for not so much with affectionate personal regard as with dollars and cents.

Happily in any age there are always exceptional people with ideas and ideals to be implemented and Wilmington has through the years been well endowed with benevolent as well as social organizations.

Inasmuch as the Church from earliest days remained the center of not only the religious but also the social life of the community, it is not surprising to find that the first organized social group in the Town was the *Ladies Benevolent Association* of the

Congregational Church, founded in 1857. An extension of an earlier ideal and way of life, its name was later changed to "Society".

Representing many of Wilmington's early families, the *Ladies Benevolent Society* (L.B.S.) was responsible for most of the social occasions of the Town. Beginning in 1859 with the first Church Fair, the Association also held suppers, festivals, and "sociables". For many years dinner was served by the ladies to the voters of Town Meeting Day.

The Society met regularly at the homes of its members, as the L.B.S. does today. Not until 1920 did the group divide up into "branches" — four working leagues for the different parts of the Town.

A *Junior Benevolent Association* was first organized in 1869. This group of young girls, called *Snowbirds* in 1880, knitted and raised money to purchase a small organ for the Primary Department.

Meanwhile, there is evidence in the Town of a secular social development. The *Young People's Literary and Musical Society* put on their first annual "Entertainment" in the spring of 1865. Presented in the Town House, these continued for a number of years and included solos, duets, and trios, as well as piano solos, dialogues, and readings liberally interspersed with the renditions of a band.

A *Wilmington Social Library* had also been created which led to the establishment of a public library in the Town in 1871.

Beside the *Wilmington Glee Club* (which furnished entertainment for the "Tea Sociables" presented by the L.B.S. in 1873), a \$40.00 item in the 1877 Town budget for Decoration Day paid the *Wilmington Brass Band* to play and J. A. Shepard to clean and care for the Town House for dances and shows.

In 1882 Mrs. Sabra Carter presented a flagstaff and band stand to the Town to embellish the Common.

Not to be outdone by the ladies of the Town, *The Farmers and Mechanics Club* was created in 1875. Organized by Harrison Allen Sheldon, it provided the working men with a social organization of their own. Sheldon served as its first president.

The Farmer's Club was noted for its annual Fair and Cattle Show which was held on both the Town House and Church grounds. Cattle were installed in the "horse sheds". Also on display were prize winning vegetables and fruit. The Farmer's Club, ever mindful of the needs of women, helped the L.B.S. by paying one half of the cost of a new range for the church kitchen.

Feeling there was insufficient social activity in this strictly rural community in 1891 twelve ladies of the Methodist Episcopal Church decided to correct the situation and "socialize". Thus the *Ladies Aid Society* was born.

A business meeting was held one month and a social the next although it would be difficult to differentiate between the two. The group sponsored church suppers and the first annual Fair was held in 1899 which enabled the women to pay several outstanding bills. The Ladies Aid became the *Women's Society for Christian Service* in 1940 and the original "spokes" became known as Circles.

The Wilmington Brass Band was still providing entertainment in 1898 when it is recorded as having played for the Strawberry Festival at the Congregational Church.

At this time Dramatic Entertainments were regularly offered at the Town Hall produced by local talent. Such names as Eames, Buck, and Carter as well as Swain and Gowing were prominent among the group.

The *Catholic Club*, the scene of much of the Town's social life at the turn of the century, occupied the present American Legion Hall.

Bazaars were sponsored, fairs were conducted and plays were produced. But not all of the participants and performers in these gala parochial events were Catholics. They came from the various religious groups in the Town.

It was an example of the cordial good will which existed among the various churches and their people.

With the turn of the century came an influx of new families leading to interest in a variety of social organizations common to neighboring cities and towns.

The institution of three worthwhile organizations, all of which survive today, occurred in 1901. These were a Masonic Lodge, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Womans Club.

Friendship Lodge, A.F. & A.M. the most prominent among these, started in September with a

membership of thirty. Because the Constitution of the Wilmington Lodge was the first in the state in a period of three years, it attracted a great deal of interest. Newly elected officers included Worshipful Master George Clark Hill.

Six years later there were 100 members. The Lodge had prospered sufficiently to purchase a building, formerly owned by the Doctors Hiller. This was converted into two halls, the upper one for use by the order while the lower one, with its kitchen for serving banquets, was rented for dances and fairs.

Masons exist to promote "friendship and brotherhood among all beings", They are presently active in Red Cross Blood Drives, the Shriners' Burns Institute, nursing home support and other community projects.

Also organized in 1901 was the *Acacia Chapter #80 of the Order of the Eastern Star*. The name "Acacia" symbolized eternal and immortal life.

Several wives of Wilmington Masons negotiated with the Grand Chapter of Massachusetts and 23 petitioners were received into the order through the courtesy of the Priscilla Chapter #52 of Reading.

Instituted on January 28, 1902, Sister Gertrude E. Hamlin and Brother Dr. Francis A. Hamlin were installed as Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron of the new Chapter.

Ames Hall was chosen as a meeting place until it was destroyed by fire in 1903. Meetings were then held in the old Masonic Hall on Middlesex Avenue.

In 1906 the Order moved to the new Masonic Hall on Church Street where it remained until 1976. It meets at present in Tewksbury.

Donations to charitable and civic causes began early. Aid has been given flood victims, the Lowell General Hospital, and needy Masonic families in Germany after World War II as well as the Salvation Army, Boy Scouts, the Heart Fund, Christmas Dinners for the needy and the Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children.

Membership was 227 during 1978, the 75th Anniversary Year.



Masonic Hall — 1980



Masonic Temple
about 1918



Masonic Officers —
1980



Grange Hall
built in 1911



Grange Officers — 1980

The *Wilmington Women's Club* was organized by Sophia F. H. Bond, a woman well versed in parliamentary law and club organization, who became its first president. While it did not immediately experience the "mushroom growth" of the other societies, its membership steadily increased, probably as a result of its calendar, which presented many topics of interest and opportunities for constructive service in the community.

Early projects included the formation of small libraries and a hot lunch program for school children, and, in 1916, the sponsorship of the Wilmington Nurse's Association.

In 1930, the Women's Club held a huge tent banquet on the Town Common to help celebrate the Town's 200th Anniversary. Since that time, Club members have been involved in many charitable activities including the establishment of a Scholarship Fund for a deserving high school senior.

More recently, the Women's Club has concentrated on promoting international awareness through its International Affairs Department and service in the community through its Departments of the Arts, Conservation, Education, Home Life and Public Affairs.

The *Wilmington Grange No. 268* was initiated in the spring of 1907 with 30 enthusiastic members. The first meetings were held in the Town Hall. Aldice G. Eames became the first Master. Two members who joined in 1908 were Ernest W. Eames and Ethel M. Williams. Mr. Eames served as Master three years and during his life filled every office except pianist. Mrs. Williams was Chaplain for 17 years. Each received a 50-year membership pin and Golden Sheaves Certificate in 1958. By 1911 the Grange Hall had been erected on Wildwood Street.

For many years, while Wilmington was largely a farming community, the Annual Grange Fair held in September was a popular Town event. Exhibitors entered many kinds of fruits and vegetables as well as flowers, preserved foods and baked goods. The Grange also sponsored other social occasions such as lawn parties, dances and plays.

After fire destroyed the old Grange Hall about 1970 the group took over the former "Maple Meadow" Portable School on Lowell Street. The first meeting was held there in 1971 with James M. Shine as Master.

Today the Grange is open to residents of Wilmington as well as surrounding towns where no Grange now exists.



WILMINGTON WOMEN'S CLUB — Open House and Tea at Harnden Tavern

Rear: left to right; Dorothy Lafionatis, Hilda Nelson, Judi Simmons, Frankline Allen, Linda Fullerton, Carol Trout, Florence Polsey, Evelyn Kaminski, Edith Michelson, Ilene Silverman.
Front Row: Helen Blake, Marion Woller, President, Alice Gardner.

The Middlesex County Extension Service was an important social and educational influence in this rural community between the first and second World Wars. Through the trustees for County Aid to Agriculture \$200. was appropriated annually. For many years Ernest W. Eames was Director.

Agricultural meetings were well attended at the Catholic Club Hall, now the American Legion, and at Grange Hall which stood on Wildwood Street. The Town's women were instructed on a variety of home making subjects including nutrition and clothing. Individual farm visits were made where requested to assist farmers with individual problems.

The Middlesex County Extension Service also sponsored a number of 4-H Clubs in Wilmington during the 1920's and '30's for Wilmington's youth. In 1928 there were 71 boys and girls involved with 4-H Club projects. Membership increased in the following years. Miss Henrietta Swain, a teacher and Principal at Walker School was one of several leaders. Her *Walker True Blue Club* was for many years a 100% club — meaning that every member enrolled completed his or her "requirements" for the year. 4-H Club members worked in the areas of food, gardening, home-canning, clothing, handicrafts and animal husbandry. Young exhibitors looked forward to the Grange Fair held in the fall of each year. Because of an increasing post-war population and a decline in interest in agricultural pursuits, 4-H activity decreased after World War II.

Boy Scouting came to Wilmington within two years of the idea taking root in America. It is a matter of record that Stanley Webber was a member of the Wilmington Boy Scout Troop in 1914 under leader Ed Lyons. Other boys in the troop were George Webber, Walter and Edwin Buck and Francis Twomey.

Stanley Webber received a Citation in 1918 from the U.S. Treasury War Service for his efforts in selling War Bonds during World War I.

In 1923, the first troop Charter was issued to a group of Wilmington citizens, including Edward N. Eames, C. H. Hanson, Phillip B. Buzzell, Alden N. Eames and Frank H. Plimpton. The scoutmaster was Herbert E. Cann.

Through the dedicated efforts of many people, Wilmington has had an outstanding scouting organization. During the Depression of the 1930's, Boy Scouting continued to grow. All equipment for camping had to be improvised, including tents. Sleeping bags were made from grain sacks and cooking pots from tin cans. The boys raised food at home while earning merit badges.

At present Wilmington has five registered Boy Scout troops, five Cub Packs and one Explorer Post for the older youth.

Among the earliest records of *Girl Scouting* in the Town of Wilmington can be found mention of a Wilmington troop which met in the Town Hall in

1940 under the leadership of Mrs. Clyde Martin and Miss Mildred Wheeler. A Senior Troop, also under Mrs. Martin's leadership, met at the Congregational Church Parsonage.

Girl Scouting has always emphasized service to the community. World War II news clippings mention the collection of scrap metal for the war effort. In more recent years scouts from ages 7 to 17 have visited the elderly, planted trees, distributed voter information, painted trash barrels for the Town Common, provided baby-sitter service and the opening Flag Ceremony at Town Meeting and participated in the Community Fund Walk-a-thon as well as in many other varied activities.

As we enter the decade of the 1980's, there are approximately 400 girls and 70 adults living in Wilmington who are members of the newly merged Spar and Spindle Girl Scout Council of the Girl Scouts of America.

Much like the Girl Scouts *The Campfire Girls* exist "to serve the community and to instill leadership" in girls from second grade through high school. Divided into three levels — Bluebird, Adventure, and Discovery — this well known organization enjoys arts and crafts, cooking, babysitting, and camping activities.

In 1943 another organization for girls, *The Wilmington Rainbow Girls*, was founded by the Acacia Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. Originally for daughters aged 12 to 20 of Masons and the Eastern Star, it is now open to girls of all denominations.

Rainbow Girl members serve their community through such service projects as working in the Shriners Burn Center. They also enjoy several annual social occasions and participate in a special church service on Rainbow Sunday in April.

The Wilmington club now consists of more than 35 active members under the guidance of Mother Advisor, Mrs. Elaine Glavin, and Worthy Advisors, Heidi Unger, Alita MacElhiney, and Cynthia Cornish.



L. to R.: Debi Mills, W.A.A.; Florence Glavin, W.A.A.; and Kathryn Hannon



Former Scouts and Leaders
 L. to R.: Stanley Webber,
 Capt. Larz Neilson,
 Foster Balser,
 Haywood Bliss,
 Philip Andrews,
 and Bill Hooper



Scouter Dick Grinder holds the medal Stanley Webber received in 1918 for selling U.S. War Bonds



Boy Scouts — Troop 136

Photographs by Larz F. Neilson



Community Fund Walk-athon participation award winners representing several youth and adult groups

The purpose of the *Community Fund* is to receive and disburse funds, as need arises, either directly or indirectly, for any charitable, educational, character building or welfare purpose.

The Fund was started in 1945 to give aid to vic-

tims of fire. Through the years it has been responsible for assisting many persons in time of need.

Charter members include Wavie Drew and Harry Deming. Anna Low is President in 1980.



Girl Scouts of Troop 692 begin 12 mile hike around Town to help raise money for the Community Fund

Photograph by Larz F. Neilson

Pioneers is a non-denominational girl's organization formed to prepare girls aged 6 to 18 for service to Christ, church, community and the world.

It was started in 1966 at Wilmington's Baptist Church by founders Beverly Roach, Barbara Welch, Sylvia Tucker and Sylvia Gouldsbroughs. The girls meet once a week at the Baptist Church, have studied homemaking skills and made visits to hospitals and nursing homes. They have done Christmas caroling at Deming Way and held progressive dinners as well as other social activities. Leadership is provided by Committee Coordinator Hope Thatcher and four leaders.

The Brigade, like *Pioneers*, is non-denominational. Its program is dedicated to leading boys to Christ and serving the community.

In 1968 Robert Smith, Robert K. Morse and Winslow Whitten brought the Brigade to Wilmington's Baptist Church. Boys 8 to 18 years old participate in such activities as leathercraft, carving, woodworking, learning skills and survival techniques. The Brigade is divided into two units: Stockade, led by Ranger Kenneth Ings for boys ages 8-11 and Battalion led by Captain Norman Thatcher for ages 12-18 years.

Among other Wilmington youth organizations in 1980 are the *Drum and Bugle Corps* for boys and girls aged 8 to 21, and *Columbian Squires*, a Club for Catholic boys aged 13 to 18. Also a wide range of athletic programs is offered through the school system and under the supervision of the Wilmington Recreation Commission.



Spotlighters production of "Godspell" presented in celebration of Wilmington's 250th Anniversary

Additional popular clubs which provide recreation and social opportunities along with the acquisition of various skills are the *Dance Club* which meets at Knights of Columbus Hall, the *Figure Skating Club* which offers instruction at the Wilmington Youth Ice Arena and the *Tennis Club* which can boast of 250 members of all ages.



Boys Race sponsored by Wilmington Recreation Commission

Billed as a social club for Senior Citizens, the *Golden Agers* was started after the construction of the Deming Way housing project off Burlington Avenue in 1960. Meetings held at the Knights of Columbus Hall, are open to all Wilmington residents over sixty years of age.

The Council on Aging and the Senior Citizens Drop-in Center located at Wilmington Plaza also provide many varied social and educational opportunities for the Town's older population.

An active group of square dance enthusiasts, the "*Skirts and Flirts*" Square Dance Club was formed in 1969 by Dora and Ernie Adolino. For over a decade couples eighteen years of age and over have met regularly for an evening of good fun and fellowship at the West Intermediate School.

During the past ten years several other worthwhile organizations, social and/or educational in essence have been chartered in the Town of Wilmington.

One of these, the *Wilmington Spotlighters, Inc.* is an amateur theater group formed in 1970 to encourage public appreciation of theater and the performing arts and to afford an opportunity to gain a knowledge of stage craft and theater arts production.

With a membership of over fifty dedicated individuals, the Spotlighters have successfully produced comedy/dramatic productions, dinner-theater and several major musicals.

Incorporated in 1974, the Wilmington Spotlighters are members of and have taken part in the annual N.E. Theatre Conference Drama Festivals at Brandeis University.

The *Wilmington Company of Minute Men* was reorganized in 1969 under the leadership of William G. Meyer. In order to promote 18th century ideals and history, the Company participates in numerous parades, colonial musters, balls and ceremonies each year.

Meeting at the Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern located on Salem Street, *The Friends of Harnden Tavern* seek to develop and preserve this publicly owned historic building. Founded in 1976 by two members of the Historical Commission, Adele Passmore and Melinda Murphy, this energetic and dedicated group holds many fund raising events and public socials for the purpose of development of Harnden Tavern as a valuable educational resource and reminder of Wilmington's past history.

Along with the *Republican and Democratic Town Committees*, the *League of Women Voters* is very visible in Wilmington politics today. The League was formed in June, 1961 when forty members met under the guidance of first President, Barbara Sullivan, at the Wildwood School.

Created to "promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government", one of the first League pro-

jects was the publication of a "Know Your Town" booklet.

League members host a yearly Candidate's Night, are involved in voter information services, sponsor Student Government programs in conjunction with the High School, and do in-depth studies on various government issues. President for 1980/81 is Janet Sullivan McGinley.

The *Wilmington Sons of Italy*, a fraternal organization dating back to 1967, holds monthly meetings and many social functions throughout the year at its Clubhouse on Ballardvale Street. Activities include Whist Parties, Las Vegas Nites, dances and buffets.

Founded by Laura Caira, Francis Grey and George Murphy, present officers include Venerable Fortune Carlino and Assistant Venerable Aldo Caira Jr.

The *St. Thomas Womens Club* organized in 1977, is an association of women of all ages under the auspices of St. Thomas Parish. The organization's purpose is to enrich the spiritual, cultural and social lives of its members by encouraging friendly relationships in a congenial atmosphere.

The Club's commitment to support the young adults of the Parish is confirmed each year as the group works to provide scholarship assistance for a deserving high school student. Meetings are held once a month in Villanova Hall. President in 1980 is Maryellen Taylor with Rev. Francis Daley as Spiritual Advisor.

The Newcomers Club was founded in April, 1978 by Welcome Wagon hostess, Kathy Salbach, who served as its first president. The Club extends a warm welcome to all people who are new to the Town. From a group of five active members, the Club has grown and become a vital part of Wilmington life. Meetings are held once a month in the Public Library, each having an informative theme such as flower arranging, home decoration, Christmas cookie exchange, etc.

Along with regular meetings, there are also various family activities and outings, socials for couples, arts and crafts projects, luncheons and pre-school playgroups. Diane Ferguson is president for 1980/81.

Since the arrival of Aleppo Temple a few years ago, the *Shriners* have become an active part of Wilmington life working on a number of fraternal and charitable projects. They are most widely associated with their support of the Burns Center for which they earn money in various ways throughout the year. Among these are the bringing of a circus and rodeo to Wilmington, events the whole Town anticipates each year.

Meetings are held at the Aleppo Auditorium on Fordham Road and membership is open to all York Rite and Scottish Rite Masons.

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion Post 136

Joseph Strong, a Captain in the U.S. Army during World War I, was a founder and first Commander in 1919 of Wilmington Post 136. Headquarters, originally the old Grange Hall on Wildwood Street, were changed in 1934 to the Catholic Club Hall, now the American Legion Hall, on Middlesex Avenue.



American Legion Hall

Veterans of World Wars I and II and the Korean War and Vietnam War are all eligible for membership. Meetings are held twice each month.

The Legion Auxiliary was started in 1921-22 with Mrs. Helen Buck as its first President. The group is open to any woman whose husband is or was a member of Post 136.

Besides holding monthly meetings, the women also sell "poppies" each spring to raise money for veterans in various hospitals.

Today nearly 1,000,000 women are enrolled in the American Legion Auxiliary, making it the largest patriotic organization of women in history.

Gold Star Mothers

A Gold Star Mother is the mother of a person killed in combat in the service of the country.

The organization dates back to World War I. At that time, flags with a white background and red border were placed in windows, indicating a son or husband in the War. A star was placed on the flag for each person in the service, and a gold star in the center indicated someone who had died.

VFW Nee-Ellsworth Post 2458

All veterans who served overseas in a combat zone or in support of a combat zone, for 30 consecutive days in a time of war, are eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Nee-Ellsworth Post 2458 had its inception in April, 1932. Under first Commander Joseph T.

Kelly, the veterans originally met in the "dug out" basement on Main Street beneath the site of their present clubhouse. Meetings are held twice a month.

The V.F.W. Auxiliary was started in April, 1933, open to any spouse, daughter or sister of a member of the Post. Meetings are held once a month under the present president Leita B. Ruggiero.

DAV William F. Tattersall Post 106

The Disabled American Veterans' primary function is taking care of hospitalized veterans and other needy persons, whose identities are kept confidential. Initiated in 1951-52 Karl S. Powers was acting First Commander. The DAV received its Charter in 1953 under Commander Harry Reed. This worthy organization has moved its meeting place several times. Having met for a time on Grove Avenue and at the Silver Lake Betterment Hall, the Post is now settled into new headquarters at the corner of Church and Main Street.

Anyone who was disabled during a war for more than 90 days or who won the Purple Heart is eligible to join the DAV. Meetings are held twice each month.

The DAV Auxiliary, also primarily involved in hospital work, is open to the immediate family of any DAV member.

Royal Canadian Legion Post 177

Although the Royal Canadian Legion has been in existence since World War II, it was established here in Wilmington only recently, in 1979.

Only one third of the membership of any Post can be U.S. citizens. Anyone who served in the Canadian forces during a war or, if a U.S. citizen, who served in a combat zone with the Canadian forces is eligible to join this organization.

Under present Commander, Eugene Blanchard, the Royal Canadian Legion meets in the American Legion Hall once a month.



VFW Nee-Ellsworth Post 2458

WILMINGTON'S SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Rotary Club

The observance of the Diamond Jubilee of Rotary International in 1980 coincides with the 35th Anniversary of the Wilmington Club which can look back, with satisfaction, on more than three decades of fellowship and productive service to the community.

Made up of many of Wilmington's business and professional leaders, Rotary had its inception in the fall of 1944 when Post Master Henry Porter was approached by representatives from the Woburn Rotary Club, President Frank Crocker and Walter Wilcox. A preliminary meeting was initiated by Porter and held on November 3rd in the Main Street Garage office of Fred F. Cain. Porter nominated Cain as first president of Wilmington Rotary, a position he held for eighteen months, until July, 1946. At this time Henry Porter was elected Cain's successor.

Other pioneers of the new Club were William Babine, Stephen Bean, Vinal Conway, Earle Hamilton, Joseph McMahan, Algot Osterman, Millard Pipes and Harry Huntley. Meetings were held, for a time, at the Silver Lake Betterment Hall and later transferred to the Masonic Hall on Church Street where they are presently located.

Wilmington has one of the smaller Rotary Clubs in the area — but one of the most active. The community has been enriched over and over again — by the contributions Rotary has made to its life.

Like Rotarians everywhere, local business and professional men have adopted the universal slogan: "He profits most who serves the best". History demonstrates, however, that Rotary emphasis has been placed not on "personal profit" but on "public service." In recent years Rotarians have come to be identified by the motto, "Service above Self."

Early in 1948, just three years after receiving its charter, the Wilmington Rotary Club set out to establish a Dental Clinic for the benefit of Wilmington school children.

The 35th anniversary picture of the Wilmington Rotary Club: Seated, (from left) Cathy McClanahan, Junior Rotarian; Earle Hamilton, Charter Member; Bob Verdonck, Stanley Webber, President David Milot, Dick Forest, Robert Doucette, Henry Porter, PP, Charter Member; Ralph Swanson PP, John Brooks, and Diane Doyle, Junior Rotarian.

Second row; Jack Cushing, Larz Neilson PP, Roger Hayden, Ray McNamara PP, Corey Coombs, Nick Vecchiarelli, Bernard Wagstaff, Peter DeGennaro, David Blackman, Walter Pierce, Walter Kaminski, Alan Altman.

Third row: Keith Nelson, Paul Butt, Robert Shelley, Sanford Carlisle PP, Bernard McMahan PP, Arthur Hayden, Dr. Stanley Filipek, Raymond Fitzmaurice, Alan Fenton, Michael Nash, Raymond Fitch, Fred Cain PP, Sidney Feldman PP, Bryant Bedell PP, John Hatfield, Charles Webster, William Butt PP.

Rear: Lou Panico, Anthony Krzeminski, Ralph Flodin PP, Winston Corbett, Edwin Nash, Fred Cain III, William Fay, Charles Doucette, Charles Cushing, Daniel Cosman, William Doyle, the Rev. Richard Evans, Douglas Andersen, Dr. John Marshall, Edward Whitney and Robert Wilton.

(PP - Past President)



Wilmington Rotary Club — 1980

Service Above Self



DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

REPRESENTATIVE

Fred F. Cain

NOV. 5, 1909 — MAY 17, 1977

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ★ SIX-TERM MEMBER OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
- ★ WILMINGTON ROTARY CLUB (CHARTER PRESIDENT)
- ★ TEWKSBURY-WILMINGTON ELKS (CHARTER TRUSTEE)
- ★ WILMINGTON KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
- ★ ANCIENT & HONORABLE ARTILLERY CO. (SERGEANT)
- ★ GREATER LOWELL CHAPTER OF THE 100 CLUB
- ★ COMMERCIAL BANK & TRUST CO. (FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN)
- ★ MASS. & NEW ENGLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

FIRST SPONSOR

- ★ WILMINGTON REG'L. HOSPITAL ASSOC. (CHARTER VICE-PRES.)
- ★ WILMINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (CHARTER DIRECTOR)
- ★ WILMINGTON SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC
- ★ WILMINGTON 225th ANNIVERSARY (CHAIRMAN)
- ★ WILMINGTON ROTARY PARK PLAYGROUND
- ★ WILMINGTON LITTLE LEAGUE
- ★ WILMINGTON POP WARNER FOOTBALL
- ★ WILMINGTON JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

HONORS & AWARDS

- ★ SATURDAY EVENING POST QUALITY DEALER AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE
- ★ TIME MAGAZINE QUALITY DEALER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY
- ★ STATE, COUNTY & MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES DISTINGUISHED LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AWARD
- ★ PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD FROM THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF AMERICA
- ★ DALE CARNEGIE AWARD FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
- ★ MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEMOCRATIC MAN OF THE YEAR (1971)
- ★ NEW ENGLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL'S COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

BELOVED HUSBAND & DEDICATED FATHER OF SEVEN CHILDREN

Wilmington Rotary Park



Dedication of Rotary Park — 1975

Left to Right: Ralph Swanson, Mel Woodside, Henry Porter, Francis Downs, Town Manager Sterling Morris, Sid Fieldman, Stanley Webber, Ray McNamara and Roger Hayden.

Rotary's second major community project was initiated in 1950 — a program to "foster, encourage and promote young people's activities and programs". Eighteen months later, Rotary Park was incorporated and became an on-going community project.

The sum of \$1,000 was expended for the purchase of the old Hiller cranberry bog between Middlesex Avenue and Church Street and the business and professional men of the community gathered together under the Rotary banner of "service" to make a gift of the Park to the Town. It took money and hard work — \$40,000 and years of draining and filling and landscaping — but today Rotary Park is a reality. A place for recreation and quiet relaxation, it is one of the assets which make Wilmington an attractive community.

More recently, Rotarians have thrown their personnel and funds behind the citizen's need for a local medical facility. The Regional Health Center in Wilmington, a new medical facility which was the dream of Rotarian Mel Woodside and his wife Lil, now provides first line protection for the community against disease, accident and other health emergencies.

Each year Rotary performs an invaluable service, providing scholarships to enable bright young Wilmington boy and girl students to continue their education at the nation's top colleges and universities.

The Wilmington Club, also, has contributed generously to the support of Rotary International's program of Fellowships for Advanced Study, which makes it possible for students around the world to pursue higher education in foreign countries.

Present officers and general membership of the Wilmington Rotary Club represent a broad cross-section of the business and industrial community. Following the same avenues of service on which their predecessors set their feet decades ago, they are aggressive in seeking new channels of service to the community.

Lions Club

Founded in Chicago in 1917, the International Association of Lions Clubs has become the largest and most active "service club" organization in the world.

The Wilmington Lions Club was Chartered in April, 1954. Founding members include Tony De Luca, Senior King Lion Joe App, and Nick DeFelice. With community support much has been accomplished in the Club's 26 year history.

Over 40,000 has been donated to Eye Research. Through the years, donations have supported many institutions such as the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, The Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Laboratory at the Boston University Medical Center, the Retina Foundation, Children's Hospital and the Joselin Diabetic Foundation.

The Wilmington Lions Club has participated in both the Blood Bank and the Eye Bank. In addition, financial assistance has been made available to needy individuals with eye related disorders. Scholarships have been given to Wilmington High School and Shawsheen Tech students. Support has also been given to the High School Football Camps. Each year, a pre-school Eye Clinic and Glaucoma Clinic is also held as a public service.

Knights of Columbus

Founded in 1960 under first Grand Knight Allan MacMullen Sr. the Knights of Columbus is a charitable organization formed to benefit the disabled, elderly and needy in our Town.

Members hold an annual "Tootsie Roll Drive", Bingo nights and other social functions. Monetary donations are also made to sponsor school athletic programs.

The Knights hold meetings in their own hall off School Street, presently under Grand Knight William DeVeau.



Knights of Columbus Hall

Kiwanis

The Kiwanis Club, started in Wilmington fourteen years ago by Haywood Bliss and Roland Wood, is an active organization trying to live up to its motto "to make this a better place for our fellow men, especially youth".

Best known as a service organization, the Kiwanis Club holds a pre-school hearing screening program for three-year-olds in conjunction with the School Department. Members also provide scholarship assistance to deserving High School students, help out at the Senior Drop-In Center and hold Senior Citizens' Nights.

For the past few years the Kiwanis Club has held a Fourth of July Supper on the Town Common and has run a popcorn concession at each of the Town's summertime concerts there.

Meetings are held weekly at local restaurants.



Casa di Fior

128 WEST STREET

WILMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

OWNED AND OPERATED

BY

ALBERT G. FIORENZA

-
- ★ NEW ENGLAND'S LARGEST PROFESSIONAL SKI SHOP
 - ★ SKIING EQUIPMENT — ALL MAJOR BRANDS
 - ★ CROSS-COUNTRY SHOP
 - ★ BOOT SHOP — LARGEST IN NEW ENGLAND
 - ★ SKI WEAR
 - ★ TENNIS SHOP
 - ★ BACKROOM BARGAINS

**SKI
HAUS**
WILMINGTON



320 LOWELL STREET (Route 129) EXT. 12 OFF ROUTE 93

WILMINGTON, MASS. 01887, TEL. (617) 658-9421



Rocco's Restaurant

1940



DePasquale Family

*It is Wilmington's 250th
and Rocco's 40th Birthdays*

Congratulations and Good Eating!



Rocco's

Established July 4, 1940



TOWN OF WILMINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

To The 250th Anniversary Committee:

On behalf of the citizens of Wilmington the Board of Selectmen would like to congratulate the 250th Anniversary Committee on the outstanding job they did to help us commemorate our Town's historic year, 1980. The Board appointed the 250th Anniversary Committee to oversee an entire year of celebrations. The Committee accomplished this task in grand style.

The Committee used a dual theme of the "Year of the Family" and "We're Doing It In Wilmington" to draw attention to the fact that the Wilmington family had a lot to celebrate. Their activities brought together families, friends and neighbors to commemorate the Town's anniversary in an extravaganza that entertained us from January to November.

The Anniversary Ball in January began the year's festivities. It brought together over 900 Wilmingtonites for an evening of reunions.

The Fourth of July Celebration was a three day festival. There were concerts on the common, fireworks at night, chicken dinners, pancake breakfasts, contests, games, carnival rides and a quadrathon.

On September 7th the Town hosted a three hour parade made up of local groups, marching bands, antique fire apparatus and automobiles, and local celebrities.

September 25th, the actual date of the Town's incorporation, was celebrated by an evening ecumenical service and the burial of a time capsule on the common.

The final event of the year was the Awards Night where we enjoyed the after glow of a years worth of celebrating.

We, the members of the Board of Selectmen, would like to take this opportunity to thank the 250th Anniversary Committee for your countless hours of hard work on behalf of the Town's anniversary celebration.

Very truly yours,

Robert J. Cain, Ch.

Aldo A. Caira

A. John Imbimbo

Rocco V. DePasquale

Daniel H. Ballou, Jr.



250 ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Front row, from left: Harriet J. Cain, Adele C. Passmore, Joan L. Maga, Chairman; Paula O'Brien, Joan D. Searfoss, Secretary.


Second row: Robert S. Boyce, treasurer; John P. Cushing, Robert J. Cain, David B. Hill, Robert A. Brown, Fructuolo T. "Rudy" Carrasco, John C. Clark, Charles P. Kelly.



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Robert J. Cain - Chairman

From left: Aldo A. Caira, Daniel H. Ballou, Jr., Rocco V. DePasquale, A. John Imbimbo.





Wilmington
250th Anniversary Ball
Saturday, January 12, 1980
Social 6:00 p.m.
Dinner 7:30 p.m.
Dancing
Shriners Auditorium
Fordham Road
Wilmington, Massachusetts
Semi-formal \$12.50 per person

No 1000





**Town of Wilmington's
250th Anniversary Ball**
Saturday, January 12, 1980
at Shriners Auditorium

This gala event will kickoff the Town's 250th Anniversary Year in a festive style. Dance to the 18 piece Big Band Sound of The Continentals. Enjoy 7 course meal served family style. Many federal, state and local dignitaries will attend. Come with your friends and neighbors and enjoy this fun-filled evening. Groups of 10 may reserve tables. For tickets, contact any committee member.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Joan Maga, Chairman | 658-8193 |
| Robert Boyce | 658-5039 |
| Robert Cain | 658-4772 |
| Robert Brown | 658-6780 |
| Harriet Cain | 658-4081 |
| Rudy Carrasco | 658-2797 |
| John Clark | 658-2257 |
| David Hill | 658-6743 |
| Charles Kelley | 658-6156 |
| Paula O'Brien | 658-6810 |
| Adele Passmore | 658-5231 |
| Joan Searfoss | 658-4882 |

**ORDER NOW --
TICKETS LIMITED
\$12.50 Per Person**
Tickets must be paid for
by January 8, 1980.
There will be no tickets
available at the door.



Photography by
James T. McFarland

Memorial Day



Weekend





Thursday, July 3 -

- Carnival - 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
- Concert - 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Bob Campbell & his Dixieland Band

Friday, July 4 -

- Carnival - 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
- Morning - North Int. vs. West Int.
- Afternoon - Classes of 1981 - 1982 - 1983 AFT Competition
- Kiwanis - Chicken Bar-B-Que - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- Concert - 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
Woburn City Band
- Minuteman Salute - 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 5 -

- Carnival - 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
- Quadrathon - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- UNH Little Red Wagon 1:00 p.m.
- Family Games - afternoon
- Teen Program - 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- Fireworks 10:00 p.m. - High School

Sunday, July 6 -

- Carnival - 2:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
- Afternoon - Displays, Exhibitions
- Concert - 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Tina Welch Show

"The Year of the Family"

WILMINGTON'S 250th ANNIVERSARY



There are some old fashioned ideals that never go out of style. Things like. . .

Caring

Cooperation

Community Spirit

And in Wilmington they're still working. Much as they did 250 years ago.

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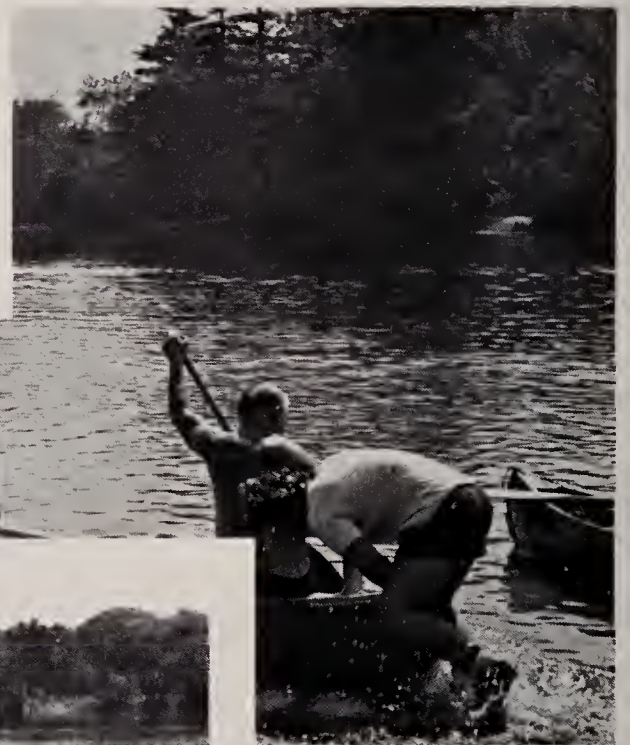
1 BURLINGTON AVENUE
WILMINGTON, MA. 01887



July 4th



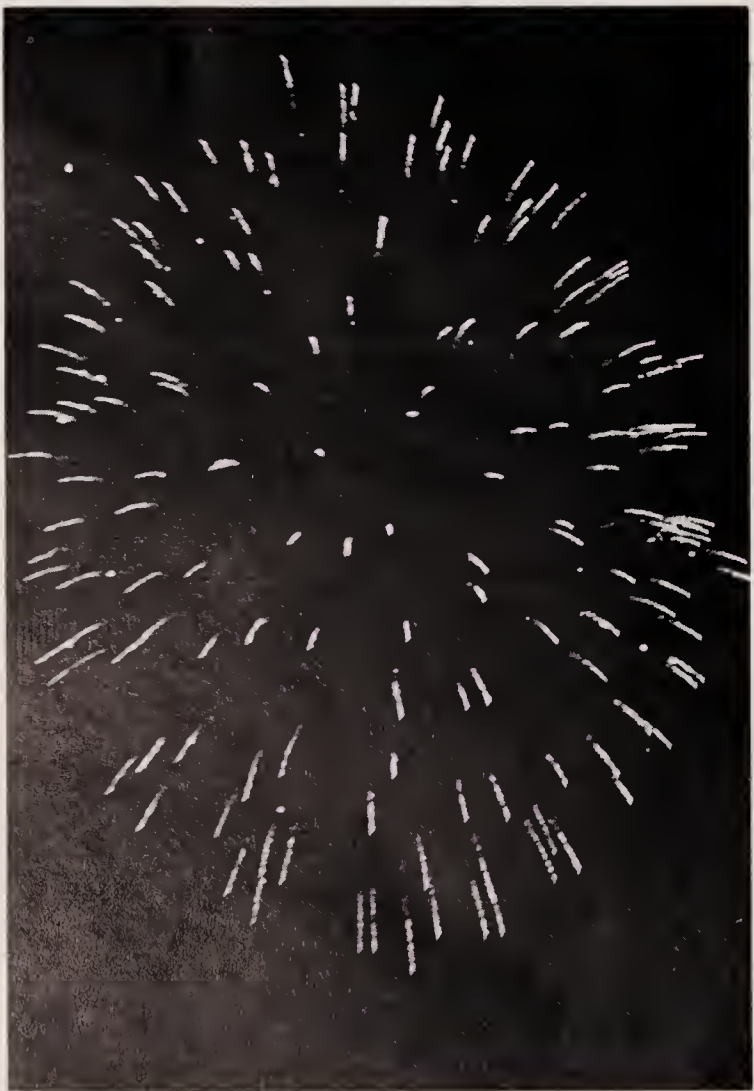
The Quadrethon



Photographs by Larz F. Neilson



July 5th



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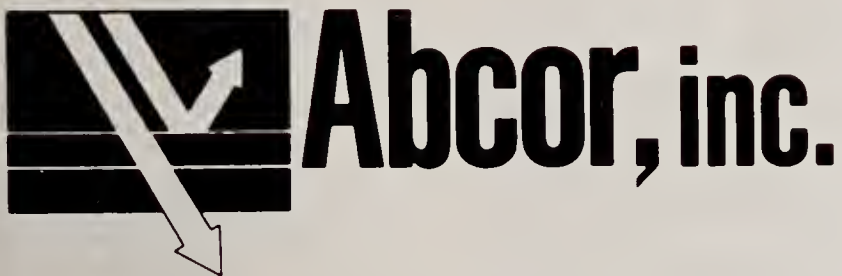
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Best wishes

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CONGRATULATIONS to the town of Wilmington on its 250th birthday from Altron Incorporated, manufacturer of Printed Circuit Boards and Interconnect Products for the Electronics Industry.

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The Hospital Bed Race

September 6, 1980





*Best
Wishes*



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“What a Day for a Parade!”

by Warren G. Newhouse

*What a day for
a parade!*



*The sky was
clear and blue.*

*The sun was
smiling brightly,*



the citizens were too.



*The whole Town had turned out
in great anticipation*

For the biggest parade they had yet been facin'.



There was no disapointment, twas deemed a big success.

It was quite plain to see they had "broken their necks"



To put on a show —



we would never forget.

As they marched thru the miles -
bet they're achin' yet!

I hope you
were there,



If you weren't its a shame



Never have so
many
called me
by name.

"Lets do it again" was the cry of the day
But our next Super Birthday is 50 years away!

The Marchers



and Floats



*The great
playing Bands!*



*The children and
their elders*



*Were all
clapping
hands.*

I'll bet they won't wait

*For it
would
bring a tear.*



*Will we do it again?
Well—
Just wait 'til next year!*



Photography by
J.E. Carlson
A.C. Passmore

AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE

Recognizing the 250th Anniversary of the Incorporation
of the Town of Wilmington

Sponsored by
The Wilmington Council
of Churches
in cooperation with
The 250th Anniversary Committee
at
St. Thomas of Villanova Church



Officiating were:
Rev. Thomas Reynolds
Rev. Richard Evans
Rev. Charles Meyers
Rev. William Smith
and
Rev. Roy Fiske

Following the Worship Service
The Minute Men lead
a procession to
the Town Common
where a Salute
was fired and—





SEPTEMBER 25, 1980

Photographs by Larz F. Neilson

a Time Capsule was buried by
Eagle Scout Larry Juergens of Boy Scout Troop 58

MANCINIS

Sub Shop

212 Main Street

Wilmington, Mass.



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WILMINGTON
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MANAGER

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*“Looking Forward
to the next
250 Years”*

**Wilmington
Chamber of Commerce**

380 Main St., Wilmington, Ma.

*Congratulations Wilmington
on your 250 year history
from your friends at
Melrose Savings Bank*

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“Key” part of your future*



Melrose Savings Bank's Services
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“Key to the Bank”



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Baldwin Crane lifts "packet boat" from reconstructed section of the "Old Middlesex Canal" in Woburn.



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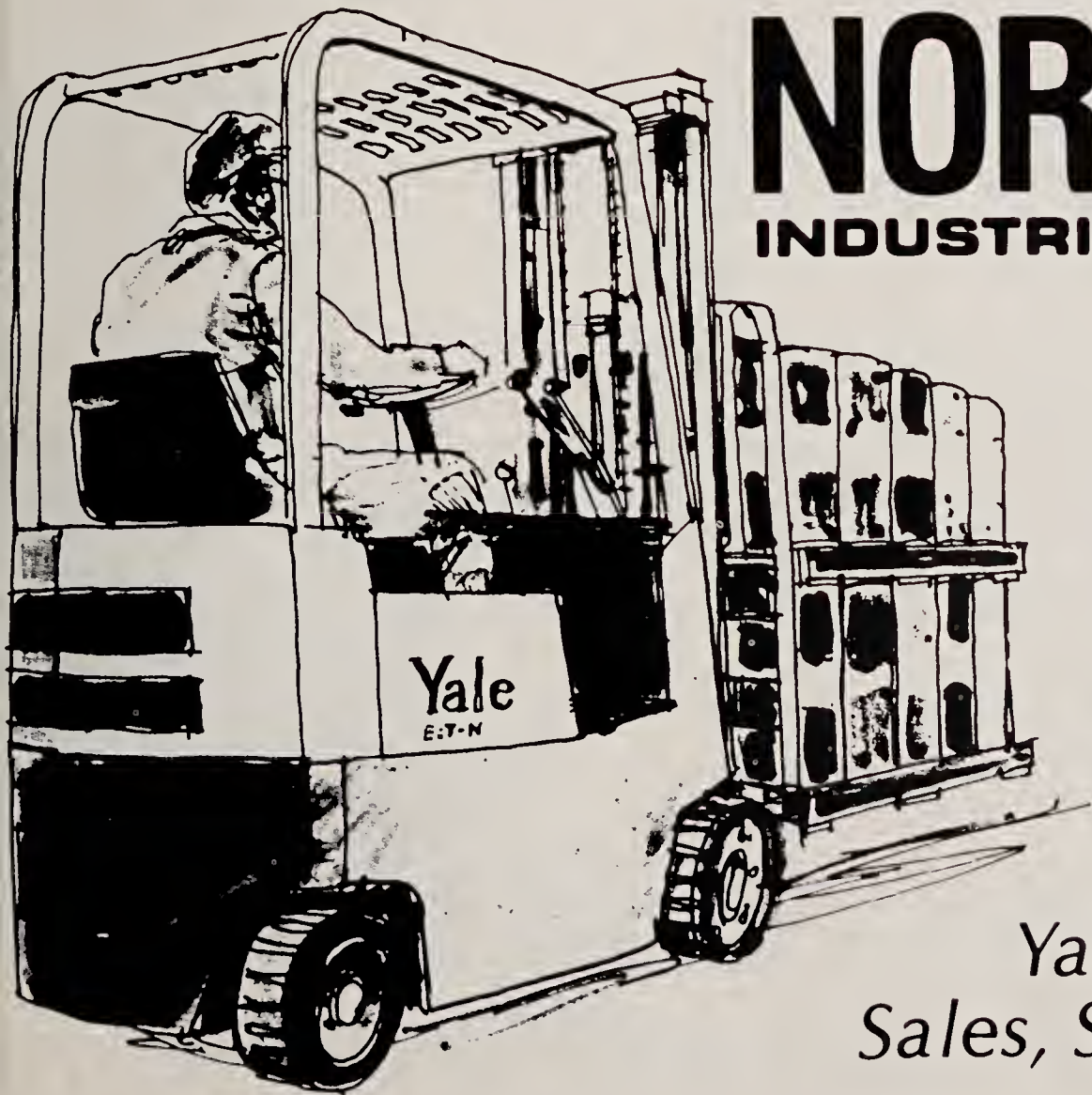
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Bill and Barbara Hooper
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9 Clark Terrace
Barbara & Roger Breaky
Congratulations on Our 250th Anniversary
Mary Paulsen and family
Kay & Dick Scanlon
Sheldon Frank Maga, Jr.
Steven Maga and Betty Cote
Pat and Willie Lynch
Dom and Jean Beninati
Donna Lauren
Steven Janet
Margaret and Bob Wagstaff
Mr. & Mrs. Irving H. Rice
10 Hanover St.
Best Wishes - Fr. Francis W. MacKin
In Memory of
Fr. Edmund W. Croke
Fr. John Calter
Mrs. Annie E. Gallagher

Best wishes to a great home town
from the Burlington Avenue Daytons
Annie L. Dayton (Nary)
Barbara M. (Turner) Dayton
David W. Dayton
Deborah B. Dayton (Savage)
Douglas P. Dayton
Frank H. Dayton
In Memory of
Julia M. Dayton (Leverone)
Paul W. Dayton
Paul W. Dayton, Jr.
William P. Dayton
Happy Anniversary from
Dr. & Mrs. Ernest Wallent
Cathleen
Rose Marie
Matthew
David and Pat Gagnon
The Colclough's
Dave & Cathy
David
Sean
Alison
We look to the future with hope
as we stand on the threshold of tomorrow
Ted, Twig, Brian and Madelyn McKie
Congratulations:
Jean and Rudy Carrasco
Laurie Carrasco
Edward Carrasco
The Carlsons - Dick and Sonja Maria
Susan, Sally, Janet,
Karen and Sonja Christine
Dick, Joan Scamp & Lullabelle Searfoss
Powderhouse Circle

Congratulations Wilmington on your "250th"
from one of your oldest industries
Diamond Crystal Salt Company
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ROURKE-ENO PAPER COMPANY
11 Industrial Way
Best Wishes from
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V. F. W. Post No. 2458 Nee-Elsworth Post
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Happy 250th Anniversary
The Skirts 'N Flirts Square Dance Club
Wilmington Unit 136 American Legion Auxiliary
119 Middlesex Avenue

Wilmington Council for the Arts
"Support your local ARTS programs"
Happy 250th Birthday to Wilmington from the
"League of Woman Voters of Wilmington"
dedicated to political responsibility through
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Wilmington, Massachusetts

Best Wishes from the

WILMINGTON WOMEN'S CLUB
organized 1901

"to form a recognized center for the promotion of
the intellectual and social life of its members and
to encourage and foster public spirit in the com-
munity"



250th Anniversary Committee

TOWN OF WILMINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS 01887

Fellow Citizens of Wilmington,

First, I would like to thank the members of the 250th Committee for the numerous hours of hard work planning, organizing and implementing the year long celebration schedule. It is dedication like this that made it such a pleasure to serve as chairman.

This Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to coordinate arrangements for the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town. Faced with a large assignment and a lack of funds the Committee in conjunction with the "Year of the Family" developed the theme of "We're Doing It In Wilmington" set out on a funfilled summer of special events and fundraising activities to overcome the financial roadblocks.

The Committee met for over a year in preparation for the many special events. The 250th celebration began with a Ball in January, followed by a flea market, dances, and special events provided by many town organizations held in cooperation with the 250th Anniversary. Athletic events played a major part in fund raising through softball challenges, the quadrathon race and the hospital bed race, as did our license plates, T-shirts, sweatshirts and other memorabilia.

The July 4th weekend was a huge success with its carnival, breakfast and supper on the Common, concerts and games for all ages and a spectacular display of old-fashioned fireworks.

The largest and we believe best parade our Town has ever had was held on September 7th.

On the evening of September 25th, the 250th Anniversary date of our Town's incorporation, an ecumenical service was celebrated at St. Thomas Church. Guest speaker for the service was a former Wilmington resident, Rev. Roy A. Fiske, who was also our Parade Marshall. Clergy from all Town Churches participated in the ecumenical program. Upon completion of the service the Wilmington Minute Men lead the procession to the Common to witness the burying of a time capsule. All present viewed a raffle drawing and received a piece of the Town's Birthday cake.

The closing event was an Awards Night and informal dance held at Shriners Auditorium on November 22nd.

The Committee's final contribution is this Commemorative Book. A copy will be placed in the Town's library for future reference along with other Anniversary Memorabilia including the original minutes, the treasurer's report, tapes from Channel 6 TV covering all events that were filmed, and a printed program of the ecumenical service signed by Rev. Fiske.

The Committee is extremely grateful and a sincere debt of gratitude is owed to clubs, organizations, churches, businesses, Aleppo Shrine, the press, cable television, and those individuals that gave so freely of their time, talents and resources in support of this celebration.

The Committee acknowledges appreciation on behalf of the Town for the use of the Old Town Hall Annex as our headquarters. This enabled the Committee to center activities around the Common.

We hope family awareness, participation and involvement in Wilmington has only just begun.

Sincerely,

Joan L. Maga, Chairman
250th Anniversary Committee



Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the following people: Louise Balser, Ann Berghaus, Bob Cain, Bob Carbone, Sonja Carlson, Arline Hardy, Joan Maga, Madelyn McKie, Joan Searfoss and Roger Walukiewicz.

Credits are also shared by contributors John Brooks, Paul Lynch, Bill Meyer, Bernard McMahon, Warren Newhouse, Arlene Surprenant and the late Philip B. Buzzell.

The following people have been especially supportive in compilation of information and photographs. They include Gertrude Eames Allgrove, Foster Balser, Ann Buzzell, Rose McMahon Cavanaugh, Marion Connor, Gertrude Condrey, Bill Dayton, Carol Frost, Thelma Howe, Gladys Harriman MacLeod, Capt. Larz Neilson, Fred and Stu Neilson, Steve O'Brien, Henry Porter, Ed Sargent, George Webster, Hugo Wiberg, Ethel Williams and the late Dorothy Babcock.

To the staff of the Memorial Library, Town Hall and the Social Science Department of Wilmington High School and to the countless others who have lent a hand along the way may I extend a heartfelt word of thanks.

Adele C. Passmore, Editor



A TOAST TO WILMINGTON

In Honor of 250 Years of Incorporation

A Toast to you Dear Wilmington,
'Tis the 250th year.
We'll fill our pewter tankards,
Our own hops will aid the beer.

Thoughts drift toward early settlers,
Whose lives were filled with strife.
When sickness and Indian arrows,
Stole children so early in life.

Hands calloused and strong cleared land,
Built homes and planted 'neath the sun.
While muskets echoed on distant fields
For freedom and love for Wilmington.

A pause and a prayer for the pioneers,
Who gave us our first hundred times two.
The last fifty is, in the same proud tradition,
The labor of me and of you.

Ann Humphrey Berghaus

1980

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